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CHANDAMAMA



KING VIKRAMADITYA AND THE THIEVES

(Page 16)

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A QUESTION OF CHARACTER

Five of the thirty odd States of India will, in the next few months, have elections to their Assemblies. A few months ago, Bihar went through that exercise. Though with the help of electronic voting machines it could have been possible to hold the elections in just one day, they were held in three phases to facilitate massive deployment of police personnel to maintain law and order and to prevent incidents like booth capturing and other malpractices outside the polling booths, while the election authorities ensured free and fair polling inside.

India is the largest democracy in the world. Ever since we gave ourselves a Constitution, we have been holding periodic elections to the Parliament and State Assemblies to choose our own representatives to function as our rulers. Naturally, they are expected to be the best of brains in the country.

It is said, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Elections which are the bedrock of democracy have, of late, become a time to display money power and muscle power. For the first time in the history of the Indian Parliament, some members have brought shame to the country.

Ages ago, one of our ancient scriptures, the *Vishnu Purana*, had stated thus: "Bharat is the greatest land on earth... it is only after great acquisition of merit that a person gets the privilege of being born a human being in this country." It does not, therefore, behove any Indian to sully the name of such a great nation.

However, it is not too late to correct ourselves. First and foremost, we must choose as our representatives men and women of character, who possess great human values like honesty and humility, and who will uphold the country's rich heritage and tradition.

Chandamama reposes its full confidence on the growing generation to retrieve the country's lost prestige.

The more a man denies himself the more he shall obtain from God.

-Horace

**I love you when you bow in your mosque, kneel in your temple,
pray in your church. For you and I are sons of one religion,
and it is the spirit.**

-Kahlil Gibran

**A man may as well expect to grow stronger by always eating
as wiser by always reading.**

-Jeremy Collier

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**Reader S. Priyakrishnan,
Chennai, writes:**

I am a *Chandamama* worm. I wait eagerly for the 27th of every month when my subscriber copy comes to me. I love the magazine, especially items like Vikram-Vetala, Kaleidoscope, and Fun with Phiya. I never miss the Adventures of G-man. My suggestion is, increase the number of pages and contents.

**Reader Meghana B. writes
from Pune:**

I just love your magazine. Till I got *Chandamama*, I did not have any story book to read. In *Chandamama*, I especially like the Vikram-Vetala stories. I hope you will soon publish the remaining prizewinning entries of the Read & React Competition.

**This came from
Bhargavi of Hyderabad:**

The first *Chandamama* that I read was the November 2005 issue. I took an instant liking to it. I suggest that it carries more comics.

**How about Arabian Nights and Jataka Tales?
Aren't they comics? -Editor**

**This came from R.Raghavendra Rao,
Bantwal:**

I am a regular reader of *Chandamama*. I love all the stories. The new comics Garuda is fantastic.

**Reader Akshay C.G. writes from
Madikeri:**

Chandamama links the ancient with the modern. The folk tale, The Miracle at the Tank, was wonderful. I also like G-Man.



MAIL BAG

**This came from Akash Shetty,
Alike:**

I am a subscriber and a regular reader of *Chandamama*. What I like is the simple language of your magazine. Please add some posters to help us collect them.

**Reader K.Vinoth Vanya of Dehra
Dun has this to say:**

Chandamama is a constant source of entertainment. I have never missed reading a single issue, which comes to me regularly.

**Reader Varsha Nair writes from
Bhopal:**

Every month I eagerly wait for my copy of *Chandamama*. I read each and every article. My favourites are the Folk Tales and Arabian Nights.



NEW TALES
OF KING
VIKRAM AND
THE VETALA

Swarnarekha's Travails

It was a dark, moonless night. Occasional flashes of lightning illuminated the sombre scene, causing an eerie dance of jerky shadows in the cremation ground. Occasionally, a jackal's spine-chilling howl or the blood-curdling laughter of some unseen evil spirit cut into the silence that hung, shroud-like, over the area. Altogether,

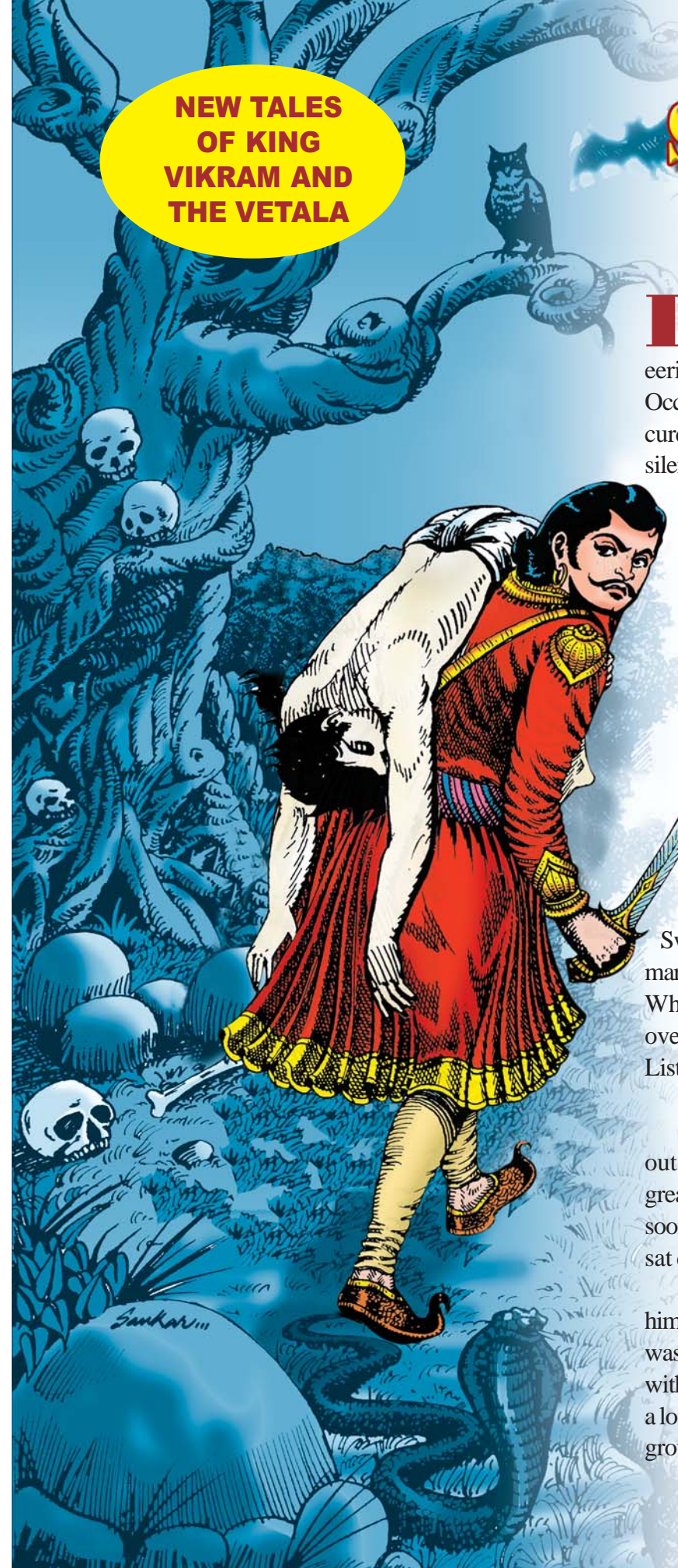
it was a scene that would strike terror into the bravest heart. But nothing could daunt the intrepid King Vikram. Once again, he made his way to the gnarled tree from which the corpse hung. Bones crunched under his feet and a screeching ghost rose from the dust in shuddering frenzy as he marched ahead.

Oblivious to all this, he reached the tree and brought down the corpse. Slinging it astride his shoulder, he had just begun his return journey when the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O king! Seeing your unceasing toil to achieve your goal, I'm reminded of the celestial nymph Swarnarekha who, too, underwent much travail, all to marry King Mayuradhwaja. But alas for the poor nymph! When she finally did manage to reach her lover after overcoming many hurdles, he heartlessly spurned her. Listen to the story."

The tale the vampire narrated went as follows.

Mayuradhwaja, the young king of Avanti, once rode out into the forest on a hunt. He galloped ahead with great gusto, so that the other members of the party were soon left far behind. By afternoon, he was exhausted and sat down to rest under a tree.

All of a sudden, a panther pounced upon him, catching him unawares. The king, who had kept aside his weapons, was now left with no other option but to fight the panther with his bare hands. He wrestled with the beast and, after a long tussle, eventually slew it. He then collapsed to the ground in a dead faint.





A celestial nymph named Swarnarekha, out on a pleasure trip in the forest, had witnessed his struggle with the panther. She went up to him and touched him lightly on the face.

The next moment, he sat up, all his cuts and wounds miraculously healed. He was spellbound by her beauty. Collecting his wits, he said, "I'm Mayuradhwaja, the king of Avanti. You've ministered to me and healed me. May I know who you are?"

Swarnarekha blushed and revealed her identity. It was soon clear to her that the king was as much smitten by her charm as she was by his. "If you consent, we could get married by *gandharva* rites."

Mayuradhwaja was delighted. But then, discretion asserted itself over his ardour, and he answered, "It is my good fortune to be able to marry you, O damsel! But you appear to have taken an impulsive decision. You're a heaven-born girl and I, a mere mortal. Life on earth – even in a king's palace – is not comparable to a heavenly existence. You can never be perfectly happy, the way you are now."

"It is my husband's proximity that will bring me

happiness," countered Swarnarekha. "With you by my side, my earthly home will be my heaven."

"Later, when you come to your senses, you'll regret it," said the king.

"Never!" said Swarnarekha firmly. "My love for you is an enduring, true bond. I have no doubt about it."

"In that case, I wish to subject you to a test – just to ascertain that your love is genuine. Are you ready for that?"

"Most certainly."

"The test is this. Go back to your sphere now, and give serious thought to this matter for six months. Resist the temptation of seeing or meeting me. If, at the end of this period, your feelings for me are still strong, then come to me. On the first full-moon night of *Bhadrapada*, I shall be waiting for you right here, under this banyan tree. We shall then get married. What do you say?" asked the king.

"So be it!" said Swarnarekha. She returned to her celestial abode. It was a great relief for her when the long-awaited full-moon day of *Bhadrapada* dawned at last.

With a light heart, Swarnarekha set out for her rendezvous with King Mayuradhwaja. Soon she entered the forest. As she was making her way to the banyan tree, she spotted a lake whose waters glittered in the moonlight, enticing her to take a dip. "A few minutes' delay won't make any difference," she reassured herself.

After removing her priceless necklace and putting it on a flowering bush, she entered the lake. The water was delightfully cool, and she forgot herself in the pleasure of swimming.

All of a sudden, a queer sensation came over her, recalling her to her surroundings. Her sixth sense warned her that something was amiss. She scrambled out of the lake and darted to the bush, only to find that her precious necklace was missing!

As she gazed frantically around, her eyes fell on a young woman standing there. Around her neck gleamed the lost necklace! Furious, Swarnarekha demanded, "Who are you, and how dare you steal my necklace? Return it to me at once!"

"My name is Kadambari, and I hail from a nearby village. I haven't stolen your necklace! I just found it on a bush and was fascinated by its beauty. So I tried it on," the girl excused herself.

“Kadambari! Such ornaments are not meant for the likes of you, and you mustn’t even touch them,” warned Swarnarekha angrily. “I’m a celestial damsel, and my necklace has magical powers.”

“I’m not concerned about its magical powers, but only with its splendour. Wearing it gives me a regal appearance. Why, I look so beautiful now that King Mayuradhwaja would definitely fall for me and marry me when he sees me thus!” said the village lass innocently.

Hearing this, Swarnarekha burst out laughing. “You dream of marrying King Mayuradhwaja, do you?” she asked scornfully.

Kadambari earnestly replied, “Indeed I do! It is for this very reason that I left my home. My parents wanted me to get married; I told them that I wished to marry the king. But they taunted me, saying that the king would never dream of marrying a commoner, much less an ugly village girl like me! Then and there, I swore that I would become the queen of Avanti. I believe that I can fulfil my vow.”

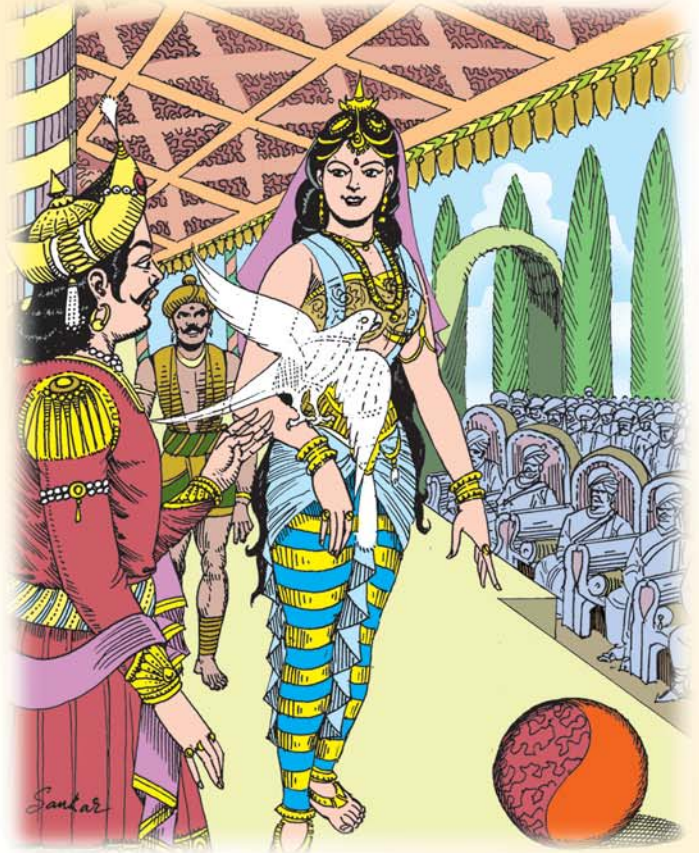
“Your vow will never be fulfilled,” Swarnarekha candidly told her. “The king intends to marry me. He has asked me to meet him under the big banyan tree yonder. Our wedding shall soon be solemnised.”

Kadambari realised that she had to get rid of Swarnarekha at any cost. Before Swarnarekha could understand what she was up to, she quickly touched the necklace around her own neck and said, “If this necklace indeed has the magical powers you say it has, may you be transformed into a parrot!”

The next moment, the beautiful nymph vanished and in her place stood a squawking parrot! Thereafter, Kadambari did not delay. With the help of the magic necklace, she took on the appearance of Swarnarekha and reached the banyan tree where King Mayuradhwaja was waiting for her.

He was delighted to see Swarnarekha, as he thought her. He led her to his palace. Their wedding was conducted with great pomp and show.

Meanwhile, Swarnarekha, in her new form, could only bemoan her misfortune. Soon afterwards, as she was flying about aimlessly, she was caught by a hunter, who then sold her to a bird-trainer. The bird-trainer taught



her to speak and to perform many tricks. Finding him sympathetic, Swarnarekha one day poured out her woes to him.

The bird-trainer took pity on the unfortunate nymph, and promised to help her. He managed to get an opportunity to perform before the king during a State function.

The audience, consisting of the king, queen, courtiers and leading citizens watched, fascinated, as the parrot performed many fantastic feats under her trainer’s direction. She also charmed them with her intelligent speech. At the end of the performance, the king declared to the trainer, “Your parrot is marvellous, indeed! What would she like for a reward?”

This was just the opportunity the trainer had been waiting for; he promptly answered, “My lord, she will herself tell you what she wants!”

Amused and intrigued, the king posed the question to the parrot, who bobbed a curtsy to him and asked a counter-question, “Will your majesty grant me anything I ask for?”

“I will – I promise!” assured the king.

“Then, my lord, kindly allow me to wear the necklace the queen has on, for a few minutes,” said the parrot.

“So be it,” said the king, and he gestured to his queen to remove her necklace and give it to the parrot. Kadambari could not disobey the king’s order.

Lo and behold! The next moment, there was a miraculous transformation. Before the eyes of the astonished audience, the parrot turned into Swarnarekha, while the false Swarnarekha stood revealed in her real form as Kadambari!

Quickly and succinctly, Swarnarekha told the startled king the whole story. As she was speaking, the hapless Kadambari, with a choked sob, ran out to the balcony. Before anyone could stop her, she had leapt to her death.

The king’s face was now grave. Heaving a sigh, he said, “Forgive me, Swarnarekha, but I cannot fulfil your wish! Both of us were fooled by Kadambari. You had to undergo much hardship on earth. Forget all that has happened; go back to your home and live happily!”

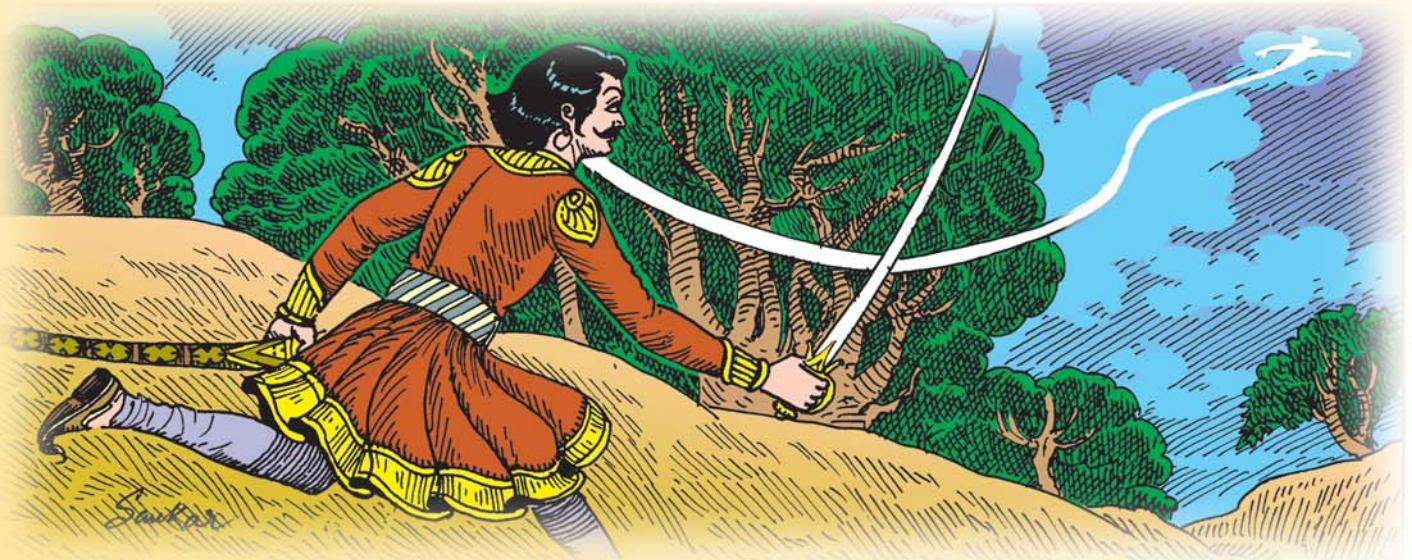
Swarnarekha turned deathly pale. But with great effort, she composed herself and whispered, “As you say, your Majesty!”

Concluding the story at this point, the vampire demanded, “O king, how could Mayuradhwaja reject the lovely damsel so callously? Had he no love for her? Was the request for a six-month gap merely an excuse to put her off? Then, if only he had turned down her request right at the beginning instead of asking her to come after six months, the poor damsel would have been spared the

subsequent trauma. So, why did he act the way he did? Speak up, if you know the answer. Otherwise, your head shall shatter into fragments!”

Without a moment’s hesitation, the king calmly answered, “There’s no doubt that King Mayuradhwaja reciprocated Swarnarekha’s love in full measure. In fact, the six-month delay he proposed was to gauge *his* love for her. His love did win over; so, he waited for her under the banyan tree. It was here that fate intervened in the form of Kadambari. It was only when he met Swarnarekha again that he realised how he had been duped. Deeply dejected, he did some introspection and came to the conclusion that his love for Swarnarekha was not as deep as he had supposed, after all – for, had it been true love, could an impostor have deceived him? He had merely been attracted by the nymph’s beauty, and was not really in love with her as he had supposed. Thus, he had inadvertently made a mockery of the sacred institution of marriage. Having already committed one mistake, he had no intention of making another – that was why he refused to marry Swarnarekha. This decision reveals his maturity and decency. Swarnarekha understood the rationale behind the decision, and hence abided by it.”

On hearing this, the vampire nodded in approval. But the very next moment, he, along with the corpse, moved off the king’s shoulder and flew back to the tree. With a little sigh, King Vikram squared his shoulders and retraced his steps towards the tree.





WRITING RECORD

A college-going girl of Chennai, T. Kavitha, sat at a table with sheets and sheets of foolscap paper and began writing. She got up 26 hours later, by which time she had written on 312 sheets (one-side) to create a new record. The earlier record stood at 24 hrs of non-stop writing. Kavitha has now been assured of an entry in India's *LIMCA Book of Records*.



COURSE OF STUDY FOR POLITICIANS



Soon after a new Lok Sabha is constituted and the newly elected members take the oath and begin participating in the sessions, they are required to attend an orientation course to help them function effectively as Members of Parliament. The Kerala University, Trivandrum, is to introduce a new course from the next academic year. Nomenclatured "Diploma in Professional Political Management", the course is intended to benefit the members of village committees, Panchayats and local self-government institutions. The strength of each batch will be 40, who will attend a 6-month course. According to the Vice-Chancellor, this is the first time such a course is being readied for those who wish to pursue a career in politics.

DOCTORS AND DOCTORS

A 'doctor in the house' is always considered an advantage because there is somebody at hand to take care of you if you were to fall ill. The Sonnad family of Mudhol taluk in Bagalkot district of Karnataka has not one but seven doctors! If you consider the family as very fortunate, then you are mistaken! Not one of them happens to be a medical doctor. All seven are holders of doctorates (Ph.Ds). It came about this way: The patriarch of the Sonnad family, Ramanna, was a landlord, who had 11 children. He looked after education when he was a minister in Mudhol Sansthan under the British government. Three sons and four daughters pursued higher studies and qualified for their doctorates. They have also earned an entry in the *Guinness Book of Records*.





From the pen of
RUSKIN BOND

KOKI'S SONG

When Koki was twelve, she and her mother went to spend part of the year with Koki's maternal grandmother who lived in a lonely old house near the river bed. Her mother was busy all day, cooking and washing clothes, while her grandmother, a round, bouncy little woman, would sit in the sun recounting stories from her own childhood.

Koki would spend the mornings helping her mother,

and the afternoons talking to her grandmother; but towards evening the old lady would go indoors, and then Koki would be on her own in the large garden.

The garden had not been looked after too well. It was overrun with semi-wild marigolds, nasturtiums and roses. Koki liked it this way because she could wander about discovering flowers emerging from tall grass and thistles.

A wall went sloping down to the river bed. A shallow stream ran along the middle of this otherwise dry water course. During the monsoons it was a rushing torrent, but these days it was a murmuring brook, with little silver fish darting about in the water.

Koki seldom went beyond the garden wall, because across the river bed was the jungle, and animals frequently came down to the water to drink. The wild boar, who were often seen, frightened her. But once she saw a deer, quite close, moving about with supple grace and dignity. It was a chital, a spotted deer. Koki stared at the animal in fascination. The deer must have become conscious of her gaze, for it looked up and stared back at Koki. What the deer saw was a small dark face, half hidden by a lot of loose black hair, and two large brown eyes shining with wonder.

The deer and the girl stared at each other for two or

MAHE

three minutes, and then somewhere a twig snapped and the startled deer went bounding away across the stream.

One evening Koki heard the distant music of a flute. She had not heard it before, and she looked over the wall to see where it came from.

A boy sat near the stream, playing on a flute, while his small herd of cows grazed on the slope. He had a light shawl thrown over his shoulders, his feet were bare and his clothes were dusty and torn. But Koki did not notice these things; she was enthralled by the simple, plaintive melody of the flute. For her, the boy was a prince who made beautiful music.

She climbed up on the wall, and sat there with her legs dangling over the other side. When the boy looked up and saw her, he rose and came nearer. He sat down on the grass about twenty metres from the wall, put the flute to his lips again and, with his eyes on Koki, continued to play.

It reminded Koki of the day she and the deer had stared at each other, both fascinated, neither of them stirring or making a sound. Only now it was for a much longer time, and one played and the other listened.

Next evening, Koki heard the flute again and was soon sitting astride the wall. When the boy saw Koki, he put down his flute and smiled at her, and then began

playing again. That evening, besides playing and listening, all they did was smile at each other. On the third evening Koki asked the boy his name.

“Somi,” he said. Then he continued to play and did not utter another word.

On the fourth evening Somi asked Koki her name, and she told him.

“I shall make a song about you,” he said. Then Somi played the sweetest melody Koki had ever heard. She found herself putting words to it and singing softly:

When you are far away

I'll sing this song.

And in my heart you'll play

All summer long.

After that, Somi always played Koki's song.

It wasn't long before Koki came down from the wall, and sometimes she and Somi would walk up the riverbed and paddle in the cold mountain water. They never said much to each other, and yet a lot seemed to have been said. Somi would leave at dusk, herding the cattle before him, calling each by a different name, and Koki would watch him go until he was a speck on the dusty road and the cow-bells tinkled distantly. She never knew where he came from or where he went. She thought she would ask him some day, but it didn't seem necessary.



One day Somi did not play the flute. Instead he put it in Koki's hands and said, "Keep it for me, I'm going away for some time. To the summer pastures in the hills." He had come without his herd that day. After he had given the flute to Koki, he turned and ran fleet-footed across the grass that was now turning from green to brown.

Koki missed Somi, but she still had the flute. She tried playing on it sometimes, but she did not have that magic touch, and all she achieved was a shrill, broken piping. Sometimes, when she was walking by herself along the dry river-bed, she thought she heard the music, sweet and low, all around her. She did not sing her song. She had made the words for Somi, and she would sing them for Somi when he returned—if ever he returned...

At night, when she lay awake, the flute seemed to play her song. It was as though the flute was actually playing by itself.

One day when Koki was at the river-bed, ankle-deep in water, the flute fell from her hands. It was carried into the middle of the stream and swept away. Koki ran downstream, splashing through the water, stumbling and wetting her clothes. She could see the flute bobbing up and down on the water. It was getting further and further away, and soon she had to stop running because she was tired and far from home.

The flute was lost, and she did not hear its music any more. Koki became quiet and listless. Grandmother complained that she could no longer make the girl interested in her stories. No one could guess the reason for Koki's unhappiness; even Koki wasn't sure.

She saw the deer once, when it came to the stream to drink. Koki was sitting on the wall, and the deer took one look at her and was so startled that it went bounding away into the forest.

Another month passed. The mountain snows melted, and the swollen stream came rushing down the valley and past the lonely old house. The garden was full of little green shoots, the grass was fresh and sweet, and the flame tree was bursting into colour. Koki, too, had grown a little taller. She sat under a mango tree, watching the sunlight stalk the shadows on the wall.

A couple of bulbuls were twittering away in a rose bush. Grandmother had told Koki that birds sang because they were happy, but what proof was there of that, Koki wondered. For all she knew, birds could just as well be singing because they felt miserable.

And then, as though accompanying the song of the birds, came the music of a flute. Koki heard it, and looked up and listened. There was no mistaking the melody. It was Koki's song. She pulled herself up on the wall and looked over.

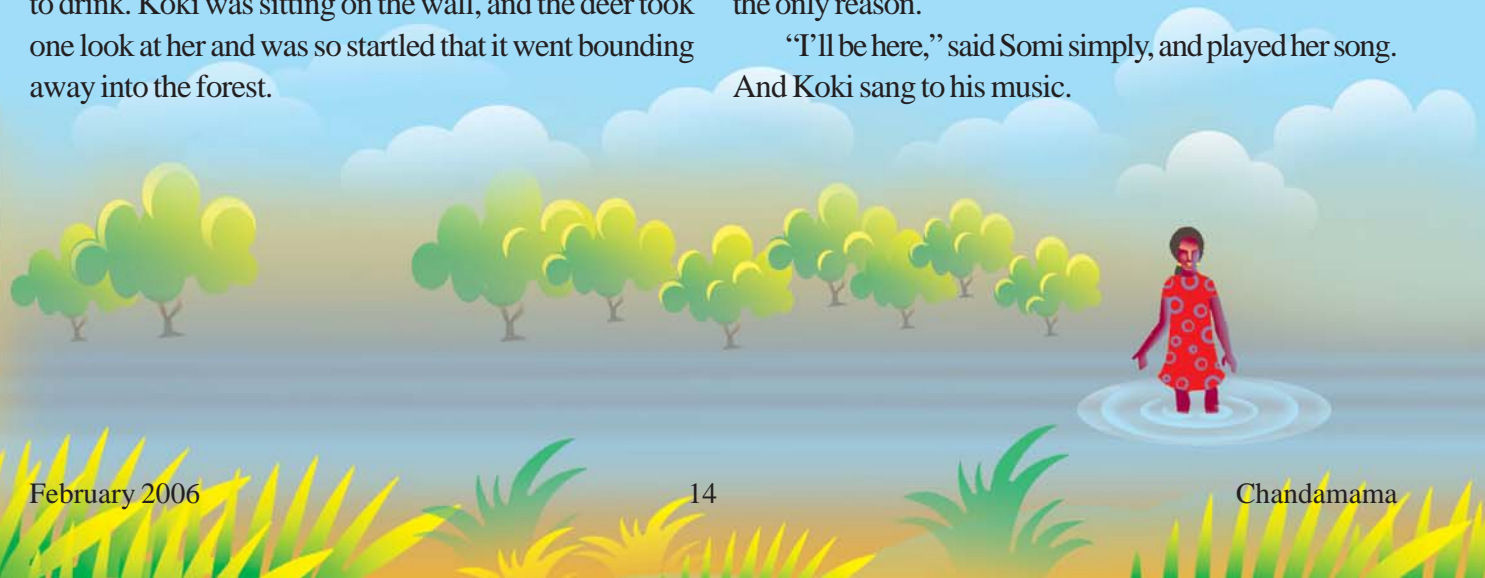
Somi sat on the grass, playing a new flute, but looking as though he had been sitting there for ages. When he saw Koki, he put down his flute and smiled, and then began playing again.

That evening they walked together down to the edge of the stream, and she noticed that the herd was larger than before. He was wearing new clothes. He told her about the lush mountain meadow where he had taken the cattle for the dry months; and she told him that she would soon be returning to her school and home in the nearby town.

"Will you come again?" he asked.

"At the end of every month," she said. "My grandmother says I must come." But she knew that wasn't the only reason.

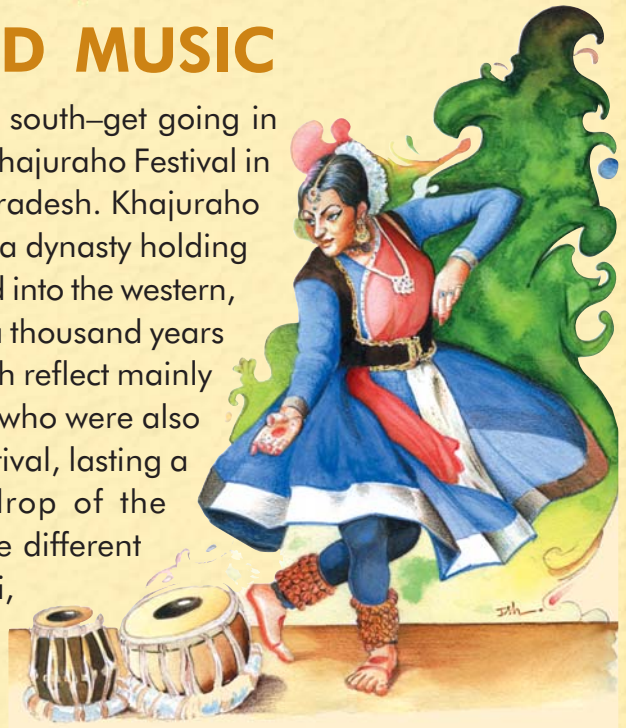
"I'll be here," said Somi simply, and played her song. And Koki sang to his music.





A TIME FOR DANCE AND MUSIC

Two festivals—one in the north and the other in the south—get going in February but conclude only in March. They are the Khajuraho Festival in Madhya Pradesh and the Deccan Festival in Andhra Pradesh. Khajuraho was once the religious capital of the powerful Chandela dynasty holding sway over Bundelkhand. The temples there are classified into the western, eastern and southern groups. Constructed more than a thousand years ago, they are famous for their sculptures in stone, which reflect mainly the life, moods and religious faith of the Rajput rulers, who were also patrons of music and dance. The Khajuraho dance festival, lasting a whole week, held against the spectacular backdrop of the magnificently lit temples, highlights the richness of the different classical dance styles, such as Kathak, Manipuri, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Bharatanatyam and Kathakali. The festival attracts some of the best exponents in the various styles. The dances are performed open air, in front of the Chitragupta temple dedicated to Surya (the Sun god), and the Viswanatha temple dedicated to Siva. The festival is also an occasion for craftsmen to display their craft typical of the region. The festival



is a celebration of the cultural heritage of Khajuraho, aimed at preserving it for posterity.

The five-day long Deccan Festival held in Hyderabad reflects the culture of the Deccan, its arts and crafts, music and dance. The highlights are the singing of Ghazals and qawalis and mushairas, typical of the city, recalling the halcyon days of the Muslim rulers. As Hyderabad is famous for its pearls and glass bangles, no festival can be without a fair for the art and crafts of the region. The food fair attracts people to the typical Hyderabad and Nawabi cuisine. The Deccan Festival is exclusively organised by the Andhra Pradesh Department of Tourism.





A PAGE FROM INDIAN HISTORY:

KING VIKRAMADITYA

King Vikramaditya was perturbed. There was a sudden spurt of thefts in the kingdom and nobody had been able to catch the thief or thieves so far. It was quite unheard of! Every effort had failed and no one had any idea as to who the culprits might be. “Thieves in Ujjaini! It’s quite disgraceful,” said King Vikramaditya, addressing the royal guards. “What’s wrong with all of you? Can’t you catch them?”

“Sire, we’ve tried our best,” said the guard in charge, “we just can’t lay our hands on them. They seem to get away every time.”

“Obviously they’re cleverer,” said the king shaking his head. “Looks as though I’ll have to attend to this myself.” The guards hung down their heads. “Very well, you may go. I’ll see what I can do.”

four men came from four different directions and seemed to utter something like a password. As they stood talking earnestly amongst themselves, one of them suddenly caught sight of the king. “Who are you?” they asked suspiciously. “What is your trade?”

“I’m Prajapal,” said the king, giving them a broad smile. “My profession? I guess it’s the same as yours. In fact, I’d been waiting for you.”

“Really? Then tell us where we are going.”

“I can’t be quite sure, but I expect you’re bound for merchant Dhanapati’s house. His ship has just returned after a profitable trip abroad.”

“Right you are!” said their leader. “You’re obviously one of us. Join our group then—the more the merrier!”

“I’d be glad to,” said the king, “but I’ve a suggestion.”

“What’s it?” asked the thieves curiously.

“Let’s go to the royal palace, instead,” said the king. “After all, how much money can a mere merchant possess, no matter how well he trades? The king is bound to have much more.”

The thieves looked at one another. Then the leader said, “No doubt, you’re right. But going to the palace would be far too risky. What if we are caught? The royal guards are far too many in number. Dhanapati’s house would be safer.”

“That’s exactly why I’m here for,” said the king, “you won’t get caught at the palace if I am there. Now, you had better tell me what each of you specializes in and how we’re going to divide the booty.”

That night King Vikramaditya disguised himself as a common man and stood waiting patiently at one of the important crossroads. Hours passed by and nothing unusual happened. Then, soon after it struck midnight,



AND THE THIEVES

"In five equal parts, of course," said the leader at once.

"And your special talent?"

"I can smell the air and identify what is inside a locked room," said the first thief.

"I can open any lock, no matter how tough," said the second. "I never forget a voice," said the third.

"And I can understand the language of birds and animals," said the leader of the gang.

"Very good," said the king. "We should have no problem then."

They made for the palace, the king leading the way. They were soon at the royal treasury. There was no guard at the door as Vikramaditya had tactfully sent him on another errand. "Why don't you smell the air and tell us what is in each of the rooms?" suggested King Vikramaditya.

The first thief soon gave them a detailed and totally correct list. "I think we had better stick to precious gems," said the king thoughtfully, "it'll be easy to divide."

"Yes, they are all in separate caskets," said the first thief.

"Well, then, let's each pick up one," said the king. "Might be dangerous if we take too many. After all, we don't want to run risks."

The second thief touched the lock and it burst open immediately. They got in and each of them picked up a casket. Just then a jackal howled outside. The leader cried, "The jackal is saying - 'how do you dare steal when the owner of the treasure is watching you?' I think we'd better leave the caskets and go back."

"Don't be silly. I'm sure you haven't understood the jackal," said Vikramaditya. "How can the king possibly

watch us when he's fast asleep inside the palace?"

"I'm sure Prajapal is right," said the other three. "It would be foolish to go back empty handed when we've come this far. And there's no king anywhere that we can see."

"Come on, all of you," said the king. The jackal howled once again, this time louder.

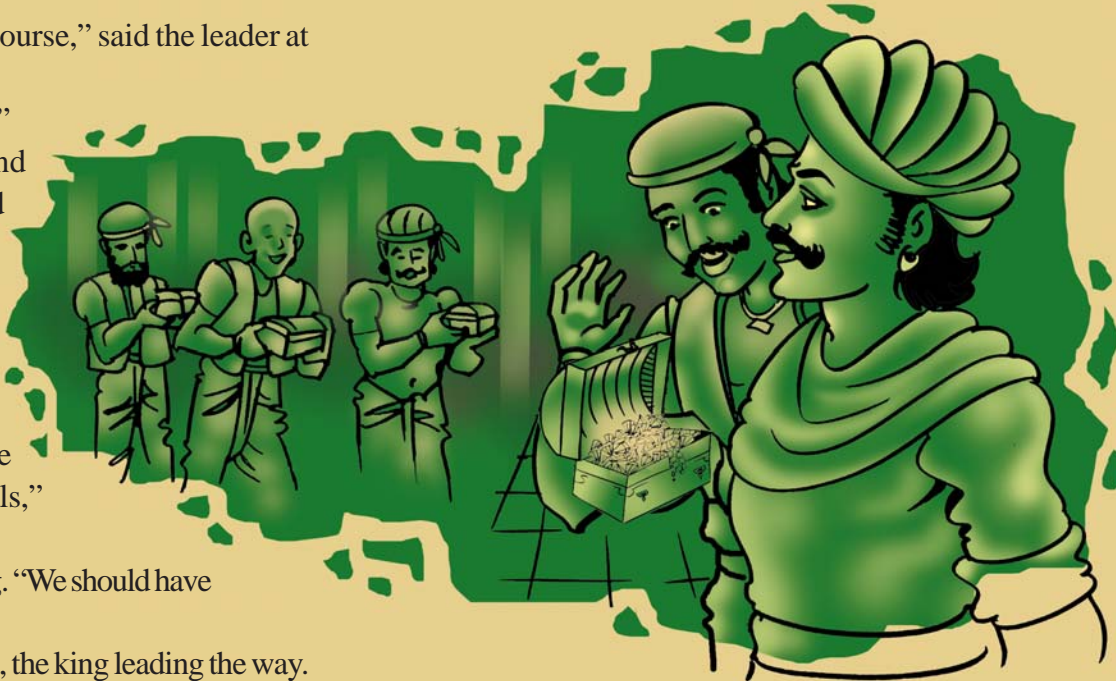
"What are they saying?" the three thieves asked once again.

The leader looked perplexed. "They are saying, 'how can the owner let you people get away with theft?' It's really funny!"

"What can that mean?" asked the other three. "There's no one watching us."

"Don't worry about it. You have simply misunderstood the jackals, that's all," said King Vikramaditya. "Come on, don't tarry inside the palace any longer. We don't want to get caught."

Once they were out on the road, the leader said, "Prajapal, thanks to you we could get all these precious gems. We could never have managed it otherwise."



"I'm glad I could be of help," said the king smiling, "but actually it is the efforts of all of us put together that we could get the caskets."

"What should we do tomorrow night?" asked the leader.

"Don't wait for the night. Let's meet at this same crossing at mid-day," said the king, "and remember, each of us should carry a big lemon. That would be our password."

"Very well," said the thieves and departed for the night. King Vikramaditya hid his own casket of gems and went back to sleep.



The next morning there was a commotion in the palace as soon as the royal treasurer discovered the missing caskets. But he was clever enough to realize that it was some insider's job, for no outsider could get inside the palace. He quietly removed another casket of gems and announced that six caskets were missing. He was sure no one would be able to prove that it was not six but five that had actually been stolen.

King Vikramaditya sent for the chief of the royal guards and blamed him for the theft in the palace. He said, "Since you aren't able to catch the thief, you'll have to bear the punishment."

The guard was really upset. He knew that he had

done everything possible and it was not really his fault. He begged the king to reconsider his decision. "I know I haven't been careless, Sire," he said, "but if you want to punish me for my ill luck, I shall accept it."

"Before I actually punish you, I want you to do something," said the king. "Go to the main crossroads at mid-day and catch hold of four men who'll be carrying a lemon each."

"Very well, Sire," said the guard and left for the city, wondering what the king meant by his strange request.

Before long, the four thieves were caught and produced before the king. "Four caskets full of precious gems were stolen from the palace last night," said King Vikramaditya. "Since you're the four who stole them, you'd better return them fast."

"We are innocent, Sire," cried three of the thieves, "we know nothing about any theft whatsoever."

"Could we speak to you alone for a moment, Sire?" asked the third thief.

The king told the others to go out and faced them alone. "Sire, I never forget a voice," said the third thief. "I know it was you who met us last night and took us to the palace in the guise of Prajapal."

"I suppose that's why the jackals said all those strange things!" cried the leader.

The other two had already taken out the caskets they had stolen. "Please forgive us and take back what we stole last night."

"I shall forgive you provided all of you promise never to steal again as long as you live," said King Vikramaditya.

"We shall not, we promise," said all four together.

King Vikramaditya presented them with land, cattle and houses so that they could lead a respectable life. The royal guard got the punishment he deserved. And there was no theft in Ujjaini any more.

- Swapna Dutta



LAUGH TILL YOU DROP!

Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt.

- Abraham Lincoln

Mohan: My dog knows math very well.

Rohan: How do you know that?

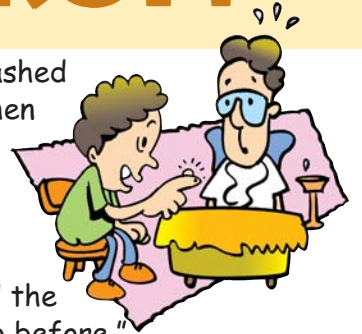
Mohan: I asked him what 18 minus 18 is, and he said nothing.



A man came to a doctor with a badly smashed finger. "Doctor," he asked anxiously, "when this heals, will I be able to play the piano?"

"Certainly you will," the doctor assured him.

"You're the best doctor I ever met," said the man happily. "I never could play the piano before."



Teacher: Payal, how many bones do you have in your body?

Payal: 208.

Teacher: Wrong; you have only 207.

Payal: Yes, but I swallowed a chicken bone at lunch.

One afternoon Sahil came home clutching an expensive new toy.

"Where did you get that?" asked his mother.

"I got it from Sohan for doing him a favour," he said. "What favour?" mother asked.

"I was hitting him on the head," Sahil explained, "and he said he would give me the toy if I stopped".



DUSHTU DATTU

Dattu and his mother were having a battle over lunch.



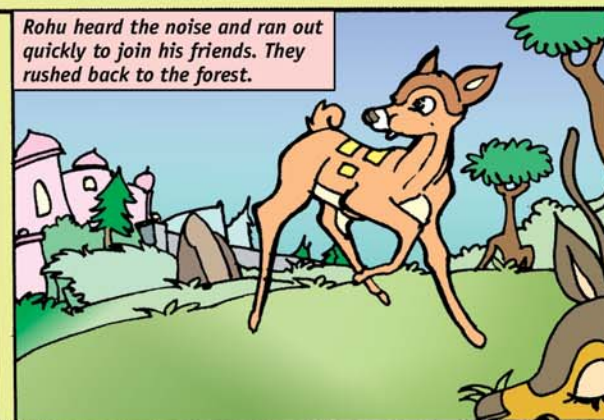
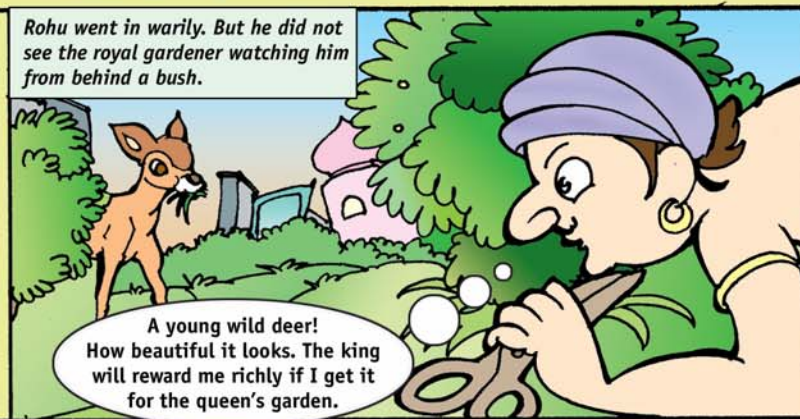
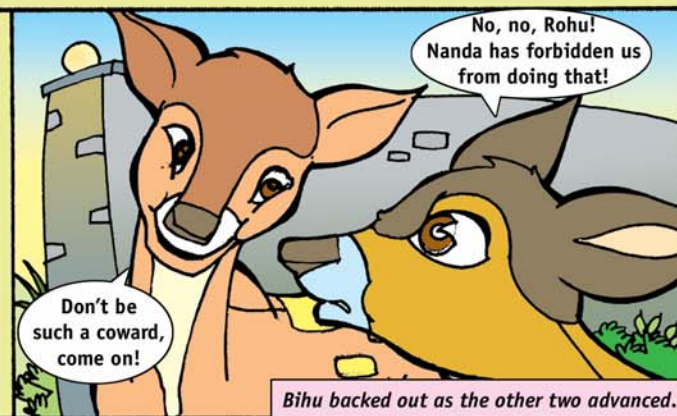
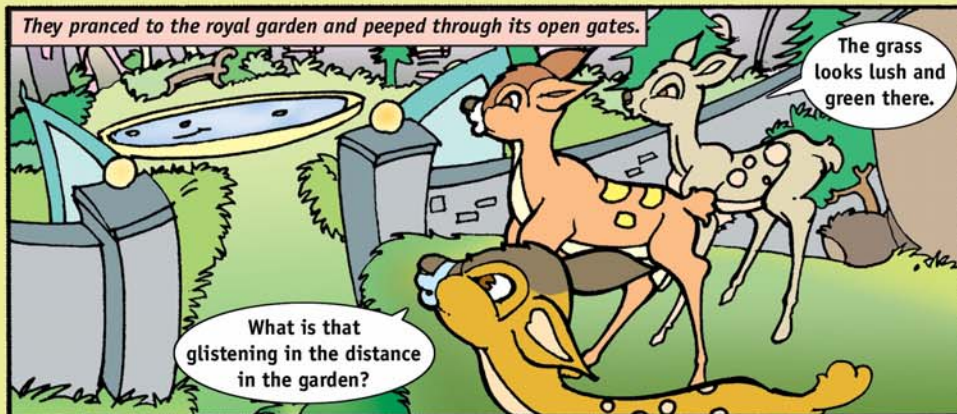
At last, his mother lost her temper...



But...



(CONTINUED FROM THE JANUARY '06 ISSUE)



Rohu came as usual and chewed the grass. He found it sweet.



This is wonderful. How nice of the gardener to sweeten it for me!

He trusted the gardener and went closer to him.



It is all for you, beautiful one!

What a kind man he is?

The next day, he waited impatiently to go to the royal garden.



Hmph... I should not let Nanda see me go to the royal garden! He'll be jealous of my good fortune.

Meanwhile, the gardener doused the grass along the path to the royal rest room, with honey.



Rohu came as usual. He nibbled the honeyed grass and little by little reached the door of the rest house.

Ah! Ha! Caught you at last!

The gardener pushed him violently into the rest house and shut the door. Rohu began running up and down the hall in panic. But it was of no use.



Boohoo! Why have I been put in this room!

Then the gardener led Rohu to a fenced enclosure in the garden. A few more deer and birds were already there.



Oh no! I've lost my freedom! Can't I ever go back to my herd in the forest?

The queen came in to see the new arrival.

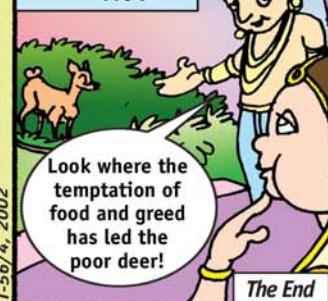


What a beauty he is!

How right Nanda was! I should've listened to him!



Soon, the king joined the queen. He observed the unhappy fawn.



Look where the temptation of food and greed has led the poor deer!

The End

JT-56/4, 2002

SCIENCE FAIR



– By Rosscote
Krishna Pillai

FEBRUARY BORN – S.S. BHATNAGAR



Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar was born on February 21, 1894 in Shahpur district of Punjab (now in Pakistan). His father, a school teacher, died when he was only eight months old. Along with his two-year elder sister, he was taken by his mother to her ancestral house in Sikandarabad, in present day UP, to be with her father. Shanti had his early education there for the first 13 years. In 1908, a friend of his father, Lala Raghunath Sahai, headmaster of Dyal Singh High School in Lahore, chanced to meet young Shanti and, impressed by his intelligence, took him under his care and put him in his school from where he matriculated in the first division. He took his B.Sc. with honours from the Forman Christian College, Lahore, in 1916. He got his M.Sc. in 1919 from the same college, where he was marked out as the most gifted student.

Shanti Swarup's involvement in scientific experiments had begun quite early in life. Even at school and college, he helped traders and industrialists to substitute imported industrial products with indigenous ones. In 1919, Bhatnagar joined the University of London and took the D.Sc. in colloid chemistry. In 1921, he became Professor of Physical Chemistry in Benares Hindu University. Three years later, Bhatnagar was appointed Director of the newly-set up University Chemical Laboratories in Lahore. By solving a number of serious problems in applied chemistry brought to him by big industrialists and agriculturists, he won their fulsome gratitude. He gifted Rs.1,50,000 received as a reward for remedying a British company's intricate oil-drilling problem, to Lahore University to set up six research scholarships for five years.

Bhatnagar's renown as an eminently capable scientific innovator spread far and wide. In 1940, he was appointed Director of Scientific and Industrial Research by the then India Government. In 1942, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was registered in Delhi with Dr. Bhatnagar as its first Director. With the vision and leadership provided by him, India took several strides in different fields of scientific and industrial advancement. On his initiative, a chain of research institutions was started between December 1945 and April 1947. Before his retirement, Bhatnagar had set up around 40 National Laboratories and Central Research Institutes now under the CSIR. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1943. In 1954, he was honoured with the Padma Bhushan title.

This eminent scientist-administrator breathed his last on January 1, 1955. He is considered an ever bright star on the Indian scientific horizon for laying the foundation of many modern "temples" of science in India.

NEW MONKEY SPECIES

A team of wildlife scientists, Anindya Sinha, Aparajita Datta, M. D. Madhusudan and Charudutt Mishra, has discovered a new species of primates belonging to the genus *Macaca* (popularly known as macaque), during two expeditions in 2003-2004, in the largely unexplored high altitude forests of western Arunachal Pradesh. They named it *Arunachal macaque*. This stocky, short-tailed, brown-haired monkey has so far been observed in subtropical forests between 2,000 and 3,500m in Tawang and West Kameng districts of the State.

The genus *Macaca* or macaque comprises 21 well-characterised species and "represents the largest and one of the most ecologically and socially diverse of all the non-human primate genera". Macaques are among the largest genera (*plural of genus*) of Old World monkeys. They show "remarkable ecological versatility and evolutionary success".

Meanwhile the presence in India of the Tibetan macaque, a large high-altitude primate, all along believed to have been restricted to China, has also been made recently by scientists R. Suresh Kumar, Charudutt Mishra and Anindya Sinha, while surveying the forests at an altitude of 2,200 m in Taksing village of central Arunachal Pradesh. A clear evidence of this species called *Macaca thibetana* was got when Suresh Kumar found an unusual skin, dark chocolate brown dorsally and pale grey below and with an extremely short, stump-like tapering tail, typical of Tibetan macaques. The discoveries "have tremendous significance to our understanding of the biology of Indian primates".



RISKS FOR THE SAKE OF SCIENCE

DARING DEATH TO DISCOVER

Louis Pasteur (see Science Fair, December 2005) had kept a number of rabid dogs in kennels with a view to collecting and examining the foaming saliva which, he believed, transmitted the disease-carrying germs. The problem was how to get it. One day, while two heavily padded assistants held the head of a powerful bull dog mad with rabies and kept its gaping mouth open, Pasteur brought his bearded face as close as possible to the dog's fangs and sucked up a few drops of the saliva from its slobbering mouth into a glass tube. Really, a dare-devilish risk!! This led to the preparation of the anti-rabies vaccine.

SCIENCE QUIZ



1. From which of the following is bitumen widely used for paving metalled roads obtained?
a. old tyres; b. kerosene; c. crude oil; d. coal.
2. What is the branch of science dealing with forest development and utilisation of forest products known as?
a. floriculture; b. silviculture; c. sericulture; d. agrostology.
3. Who first stated the universal law of gravitation?
a. Einstein; b. Faraday; c. Newton; d. Planck.
4. In which organ in the human body is the digestion of carbohydrates, fats and proteins completed?
a. stomach; b. small intestine; c. large intestine; d. liver.

Answer: 1.c. crude oil, 2.b. silviculture, 3.c. Newton, 4.b. small intestine.

THE STING OPERATION



On a fine sunny morning, Mulla Nasruddin was standing at the gate of his house when he noticed Ghiyazuddin, an old man, with a marked stoop, waving to him, heading toward his house. His gait was indeed funny. He swung now to the right, thence to the left, and once again to the right, his feet coming in each other's way at awkward angles with every step. Nasruddin felt like laughing. He knew it was bad manners to laugh at a man for his handicap. But Nasruddin found it hard to keep the laughter in check.

So he turned around, his back to the figure that was heading toward his gate and gave himself up to laughter. He laughed to his heart's content.

"Salaam alaikum," Ghiyazuddin walked up to Nasruddin and hailed him.

"Alaikum salaam." Nasruddin turned around, his body racking with laughter.

"What is tickling you?" the old man enquired.

"Don't you know that I love to laugh? I don't need a reason to laugh."

Mulla Nasruddin said between bouts of laughter. "Laughter costs me nothing. I can laugh for as long as I like and yet I don't have to pay even the tenth of a Shekel for that luxury. Food may become scarce. Drinks may not be readily available. But, laughter! Believe me, there will never be a shortage of laughter. Further, laughter is the best medicine. Laugh and the whole world laughs with you. Cry and you cry alone." Nasruddin continued to laugh.

Finally, when the rings of laughter petered off, he held Ghiyazuddin by the arm and led him in. "Please be seated," he told the old man.

"I would rather stand. I can't sit. The stoop always comes in the way," said Ghiyazuddin, turning his head up to look into the eyes of Nasruddin.

Nasruddin waited for Ghiyazuddin to tell him what had brought him to him.

"Nasruddin, someone entered my yard last night and walked away with quite a few farm tools which I had kept in a corner. That had never happened before. I'm afraid we have a thief in our midst."

"Impossible!" Nasruddin expressed shock and surprise.

"Yet true," the old man said in a firm tone.

"Since the time I was just a child, I've never heard of a theft in our village. I've never seen anyone locking the gate of his house. So, it is a little hard to believe that we have a thief in our midst. But you sound genuine," Nasruddin peered intently at Ghiyazuddin.

"Who could be the thief?" Ghiyazuddin said to himself.

"Only Allah knows."

"Allah is not going to tell us who the thief is. We'll have to track him down. You may know what to do to catch the thief, red-handed," said Ghiyazuddin.



“Look out for everyone with red hands,” Nasruddin knew what the idiom, Catch one red handed, meant, but decided to have fun with words.

“Did you check with your wife? She might have cleared the yard, in your absence, picked up the tools and secured them elsewhere.” Nasruddin still could not believe the presence of a thief in their village.

“She did nothing of the sort, the lazy old hag!”

“Let’s wait for a day or two.”

“You expect the thief to give himself up?”

“Oh, no! I want to give the thief time to play his dirty tricks again. I want to make the thief believe that he can get away with his crime. Then we will get the chance to catch him red-handed,” Nasruddin smiled, assuring him that he would get hold of the thief in a few days.

Next day, it was Ameenuddin who found that a couple of old stools he had left in the courtyard of his house had vanished at night.

“So the thief has struck again,” Nasruddin sounded quite pleased.

“Who’ll catch him?” everyone asked.

“The thief will give himself up,” Nasruddin laughed loudly.

Two more days passed. Each day, the thief got hold of whatever he could from one house or the other. The villagers became furious. “Nasruddin, when would you catch the thief?” they asked.

“Be patient,” Nasruddin had a merry twinkle in his eyes. “Soon, the thief will give himself up.”

“Are you sure?”

“Have I ever failed you?” Nasruddin smiled. That smile was enough to win over the people. They bowed and went away.

That day, a cart loaded with half a dozen medium-sized wooden boxes and crates halted in front of Nasruddin’s gate. The driver knocked at the gate and called out for Nasruddin. He waited. Finally Nasruddin came out. Together the two unloaded the boxes and crates carefully. They carried them to a corner of the yard and stacked them side-by-side.

“Be careful. The boxes contain something very precious. Wish I could store them inside the house. But where’s the space? I’ll have to leave them here, in the

yard, for the night. Tomorrow, maybe, I’ll find a more secure place,” he said aloud.

He paid the driver one Shekel as a tip. The driver got back to the cart and drove away.

Nasruddin stood at the gate for a long time. He called everyone who passed by and showed them the boxes piled in the yard. He told them they contained something very precious.

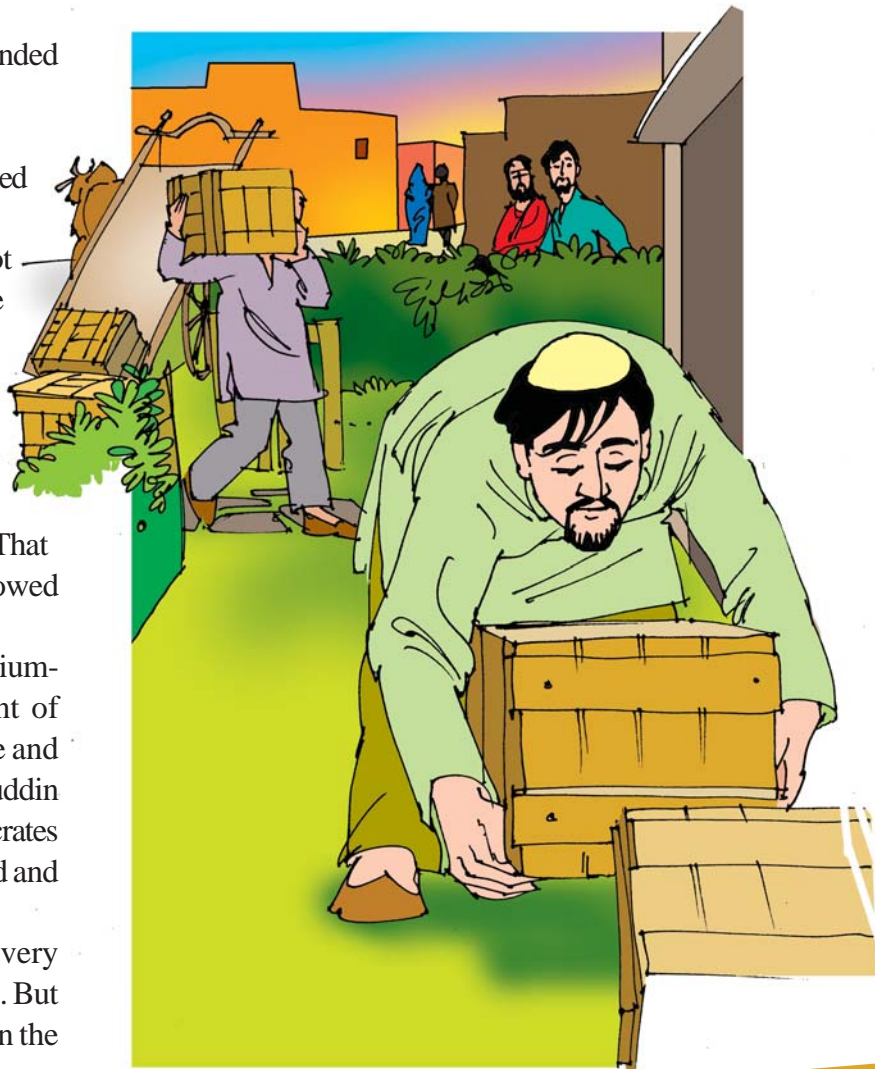
“Why don’t you secure them in a better place?”

“I don’t think anyone will dare steal them.”

“You know that a thief is active in our village. He may walk away with the boxes.”

“I dare him to do that,” Nasruddin laughed.

Some of them advised him to stay awake at night, and keep a watch.



"The contents of the boxes know how to take care of themselves. I know that. So, tonight, as on other nights, I shall sleep soundly."

"He's the snoring champion of our village," Ghiazuddin laughed.

"His donkey can't bray as loud as his snore," joked Ameenuddin.

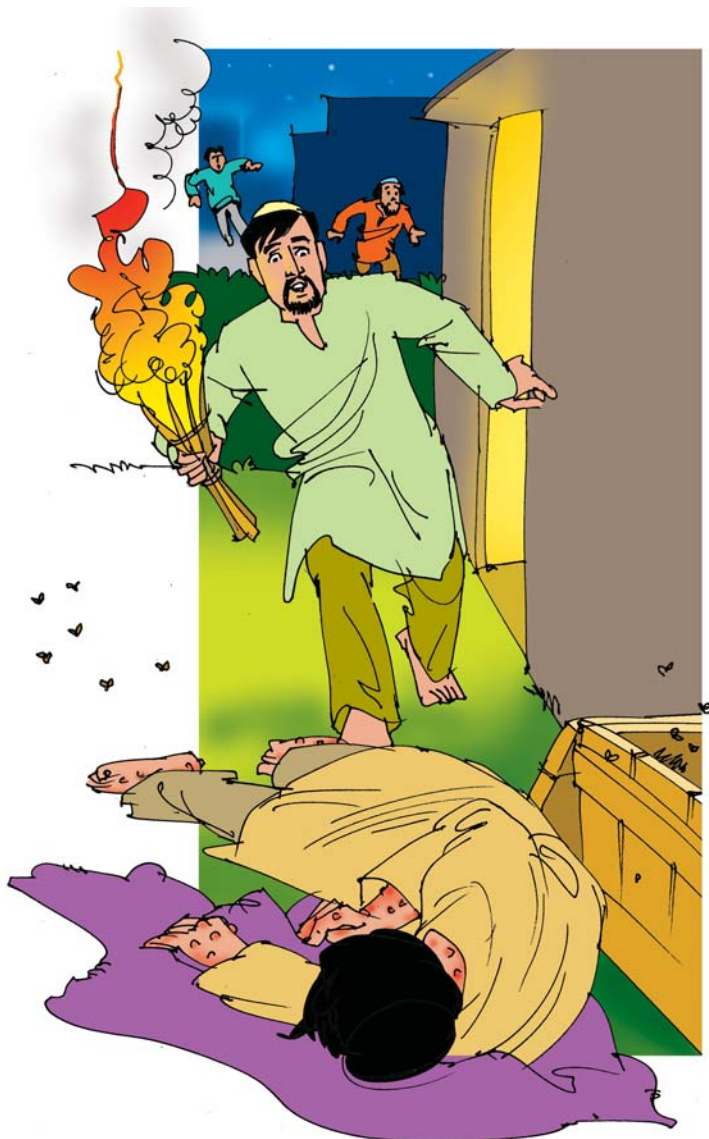
Nasruddin did not mind their poking fun at him. He laughed and laughed and laughed. That night, a cold wind scurried across. Everyone retired to bed early. They did not want to expose themselves to the cold.

Around midnight, a figure covered in a woollen wrap, came out of a house. Only his eyes were visible. He walked briskly, made a beeline to Nasruddin's house. He held a huge sack in one hand. The sack swung with every step he took. He walked briskly, eager to lay hands on the contents of the boxes stacked in Nasruddin's yard. He opened the gate and moved in, stealthily. He looked all around. Finally, he spotted the boxes. His eyes lit up with joy. He hurried to the pile. The woollen shawl made it hard for him to carry on with his work. So he took it off, dropped it on the ground, hoping to pick it up later. He gently removed the top lid of one box and pushed his hand in.

The next moment an eerie cry filled the air. The man pulled his hand out and screamed in pain. He tried to run away, but he could not. Wherever he turned, he found new sources of pain. He was stung on the nose and the cheeks and the chin. His arms and legs were not spared either. He spun around, trying to avoid being bitten. His shrieks resounded through the village. A few daring men hurried to find out what the matter was. One of them got close to the gate and received a painful sting. He ran back, shouting that evil spirits had taken over the village. Then someone checked the spot where he had been stung. "That bears the clear mark of a bee's sting."

The thief writhed in pain and finally fell down, unconscious. The bees now lost interest in him. They flew back to the hive that nestled in the top box.

Nasruddin came out, once he knew the ground was clear. He brought along a lighted torch, fuelled by rolled dry palm fronds. He bent and held the torch close to check the identity of the unconscious man. Then he



shouted, "I've caught the thief. I've caught him red handed. Nay, I've caught him red faced and red limbed, too. What a sight Jalaluddin presents now. He has turned red all over."

The villagers ran in. They waited till he stirred and moaned. "Served you right," everyone shouted.

"You got what you richly deserved. Steal again and you'll not live to tell the tale. I'll lure you to push your hand into a box holding vipers and that will be the end of you," Nasruddin warned.

"Please forgive me. I shall return every single item I stole. And I promise never to steal again," Jalaluddin begged.

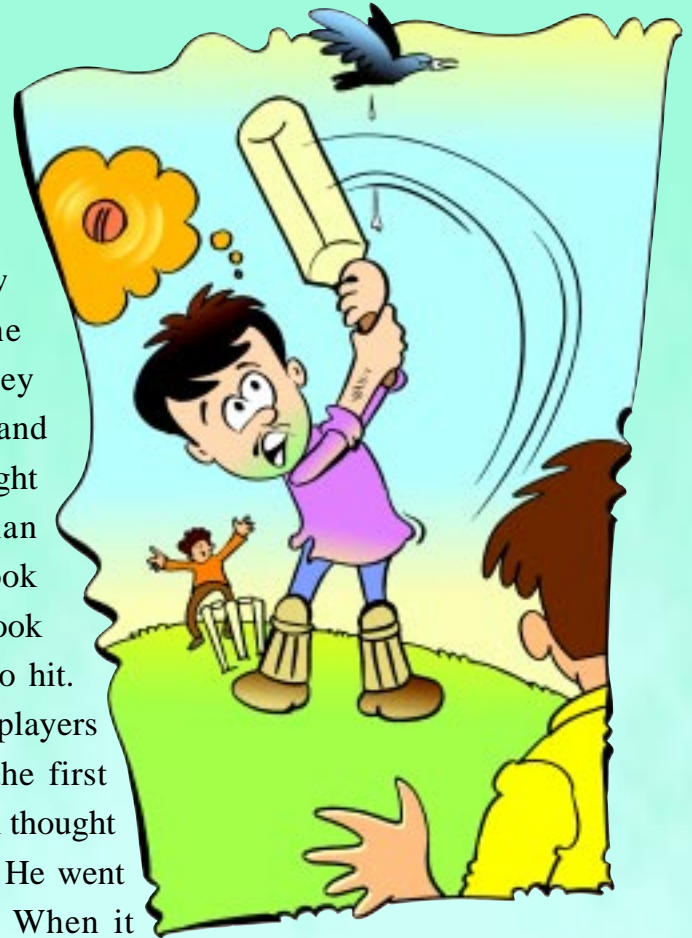
Everyone congratulated Nasruddin for what they called, The Sting Operation., that helped them catch the thief.

KALEIDOSCOPE

MOHAN PLAYS CRICKET

Everyone called Mohan a fool. His family was no exception. One day, his friends asked him to join them at cricket. Mohan didn't know a thing about the game. His friend told him, 'When we tell you, take that piece of wood and hit the round thing which we'll throw. It's not necessary to know anything else. Soon Mohan came to bat. The 'Umpire' gave him some advice: "You've to obey all that I say." The bowler threw the first ball and Mohan hit the ball with full force. A fielder caught the ball. The umpire raised his finger. Mohan thought that the umpire was asking him to look up. He looked up and saw a crow. Mohan took him to be the next bowler, and got ready to hit. But the crow dirtied his face. The other players told him to return to the pavilion till the first innings of the 'match' was over. Mohan thought they were referring to a match-box. He went to the pavilion and lit a match. When it

was half burnt, he threw it away and went back to the field. The umpire again sent him off telling him to come back only when he called him. Soon his chance to field came. He stood at the boundary. He made a catch. The umpire put up his finger. Mohan looked up and saw an aeroplane. He thought the umpire was asking him to throw the ball at the plane. He did it with such force that the ball was lost and the match ended abruptly.





MY MOTHER

She is so fat,
And wears a hat.
Hates to be lazy,
But loves to be busy.
Dislikes my mischieves,
But always she forgives.
Never she complains,
Gives me all guidelines.
I am grateful to her,
She helps me for ever.
My 'hats off' to her,
She is my pretty mother.

-Rakshith R.Ulival (14), Alike

GRANDMA

A person who sees two generations grow up
Gain wisdom and experience
During crisis they show up
These qualities and help us.

My grandma was a living example
Of such good qualities and high ideals,
Who faced life's trials and tribulations,
With sheer courage and determination.

Though not in this world now,
She continues to live in our hearts
And while she glows there I pray :
Oh God, thou bless me;

So that I and all her grandchildren
Can be what she once dreamt us to be.

-Pratikshya Mishra(12), Sambalpur





Rakesh : How come you are so clever?

Mohan : I take pills to become clever.

Rakesh : Will you spare a few for me?

Mohan : Here, take these.

Rakesh (after popping one into his mouth) : But they're toffees!

Mohan : See, it has already started working.

-Nishchal M.(14), Alike

Priya : My father is getting more and more absent-minded.

Vikas : What happened?

Priya : Today, he went to take a train. On reaching the railway station, he looked at his hand and saw that he had forgotten to take his watch. He then took it out of his pocket to see whether he had enough time to go back home to fetch it.

-Karthik Bhushan (14), Udupi



Passenger : Is this bus running on time?

Conductor : No, it is running on wheels.

-S. Vismitha (11), Bangalore

Aunt : Why do you spread sugar under your pillow before sleeping?

Bunty : So, that I can get sweet dreams.

-Gunja Tirumala Kumar (14), Jaggayyapet



Car owner

(interviewing a prospective driver) : Have you ever been arrested?

Applicant for driver's post : No, sir.

Car owner : Why not?

Applicant : Never been caught, sir.

-Girish C.J. (14), Bantwal



Sonu : Dad, when my results are out, what'll you give me?

Dad : A bicycle, if you pass; an auto-rickshaw, if you fail!

-Karan G.V. Gadag

Film director : In the last scene, you have to jump from the 13th floor.

Actor : In case I die?

Director : It does not matter; it is the last scene, anyway.

-Mrutyunjay P. Awati, Belgaum



Principal : Why didn't you bring your admission form?

Sanjay: I had no time to go to Delhi, Sir.

Principal : What has Delhi got to do with your admission?

Sanjay : The form says, we should fill our names in capitals only.

-Naveen Bhat, Alike

CROSSWORD

Find out 15 cities of the world in the grid given below:



N	O	D	N	O	L	X	H	G	P
E	R	E	L	I	M	A	N	B	A
W	I	L	U	V	W	I	B	E	R
Y	A	H	Q	T	L	I	R	I	I
O	C	I	S	R	O	P	A	J	S
R	O	M	E	N	O	J	S	I	T
K	A	B	U	L	S	D	I	N	O
O	S	L	O	A	A	K	L	G	K
Z	B	C	L	M	K	E	I	F	Y
H	Y	D	E	R	A	B	A	D	O

(Clue: The names may read left to right or right to left or diagonal or vertically upwards or vertically downwards.)

-Mrutyunjay P. Awati Belgaum

RIDDLES

1. Why do artists sign their paintings?

-Naveen Bhat, Alike



2. This castle has four walls But none has water. It has 18 thieves And one queen to guard them.

-Nagarjun (10), Bahrain

3. What is useful only after it is broken?

-S.Vismitha (11), Bangalore

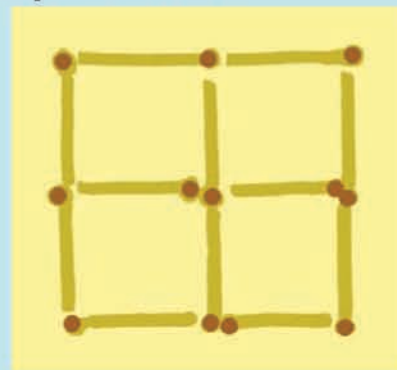
4. An elephant was riding a scooter with an ant on the pillion. The vehicle skidded. They both were thrown off the two wheeler. The elephant was grievously injured, while the ant escaped. How?

-Karan G.V., Gadag



PUZZLE

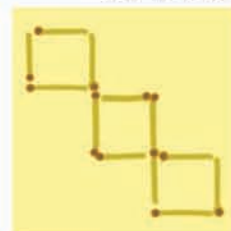
Here 12 match sticks are arranged so as to form four equal squares. Change the figure into a three square figure, changing the position of only four matches. Ensure that you don't miss any match stick.



-Ashirwad Nayak (15), Bhubaneswar

1. To help people know that they are hung on the wall correctly, 2. Carrom Board, 3. Egg, 4. The ant was wearing a helmet.

RIDDLES:



PUZZLE:

O	D	A	B	A	R	E	D	H	Y
Y	F	I	E	K	M	L	C	Z	B
K	G	L	K	A	A	L	O	S	L
O	N	I	D	S	L	U	B	K	A
T	S	I	J	O	N	E	M	R	O
S	J	A	P	R	O	S	I	C	O
I	I	R	I	L	T	Q	H	A	Y
R	E	B	I	W	V	L	I	W	I
A	B	A	N	A	L	I	M	E	R
P	G	H	X	L	O	N	D	O	N

CROSSWORD:

ANSWERS:

THE ADVENTURES OF **G-man**



ANDROMANIA

ULTIMATUM PART 2

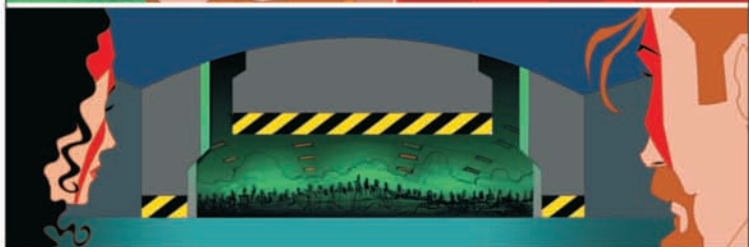
BROUGHT TO YOU BY



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Story so far: G-man and his friends destroy Terrolene's entire robotic army. Or so they think. Terrolene is down but not out. He has a surprise in store for them.





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Was that for real.



Me dost not believe me eyes.



Well my friends
you don't like what
you see do you?

I'll let my androids*
do the work while
I go get some rest.
The Andromania has
just begun.

*android: an artificially created being that resembles a human being.

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*ANDROMANIA Part-1

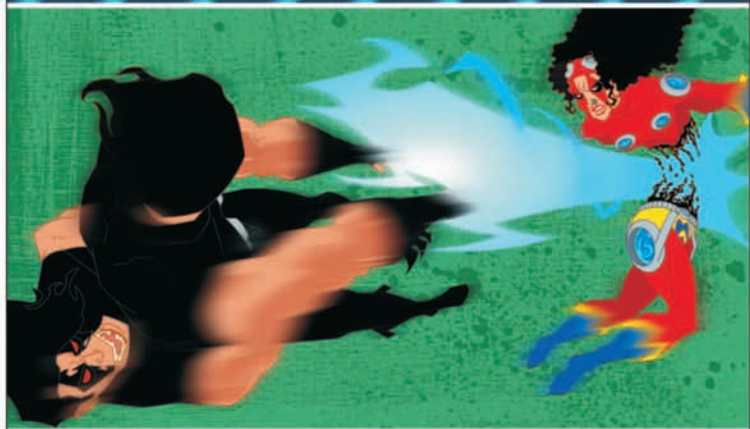
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G-man whizzes through the corridors of T-tower basement.



DANGER
DO NOT ENTER

POWER SUPPLY FOR



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Bingo!



Just as I thought, they are all being controlled by one supercomputer. THAT'S how they keep evolving.

POWER SUPPLY FOR **G-man**



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Now where do I start?

I know...



G-man fires in all directions destroying everything in sight.



So much for your surprise Terrolene.

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Good show G-man,
so tell us what you did.

Not now, this place is freaking me out,
there's just too many of us here!

Ya! You are sitting on me there.

Tell us over some coffee.

Me will need more
than just coffee now.

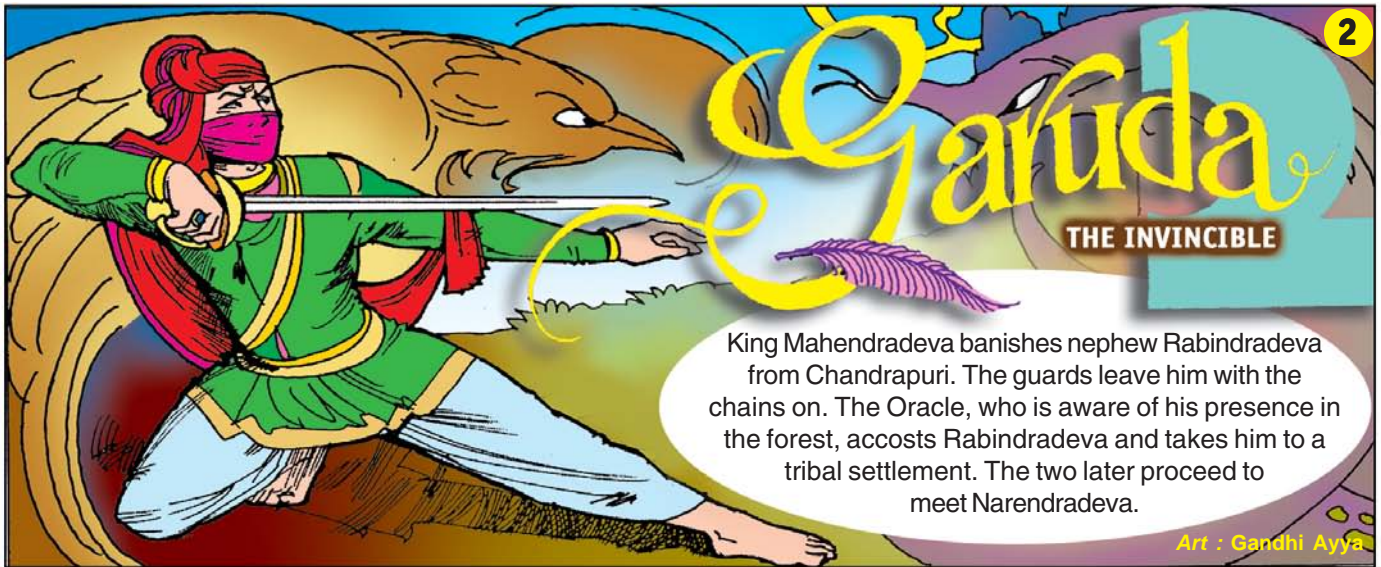
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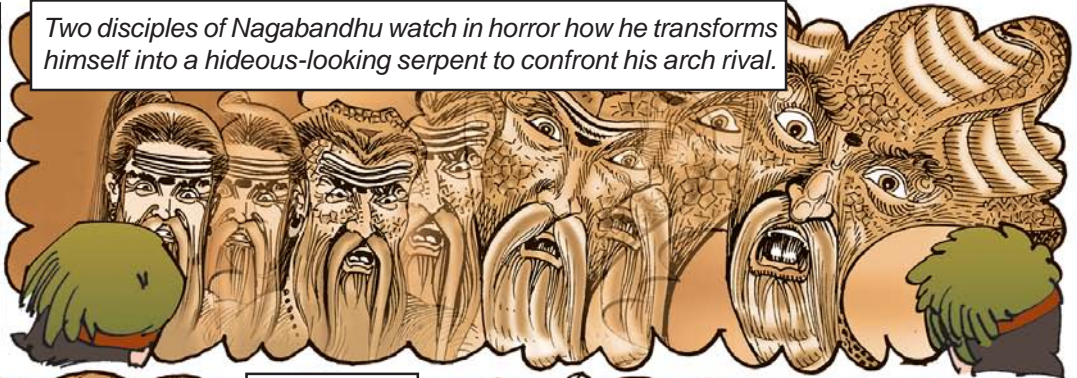
The End



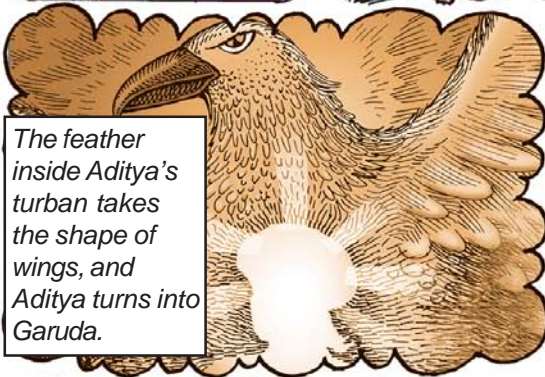
The Oracle tells Rabindradeva what happened at the temple in Sarpadesa.



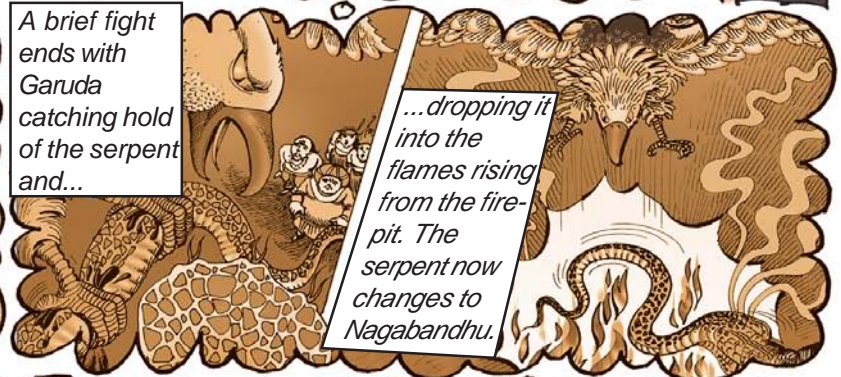
Two disciples of Nagabandhu watch in horror how he transforms himself into a hideous-looking serpent to confront his arch rival.



The feather inside Aditya's turban takes the shape of wings, and Aditya turns into Garuda.

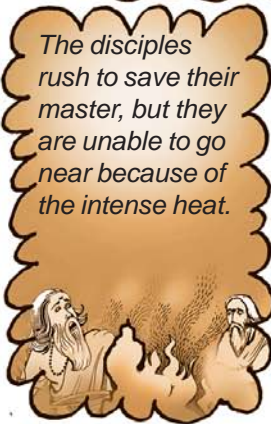


A brief fight ends with Garuda catching hold of the serpent and...



...dropping it into the flames rising from the fire-pit. The serpent now changes to Nagabandhu.

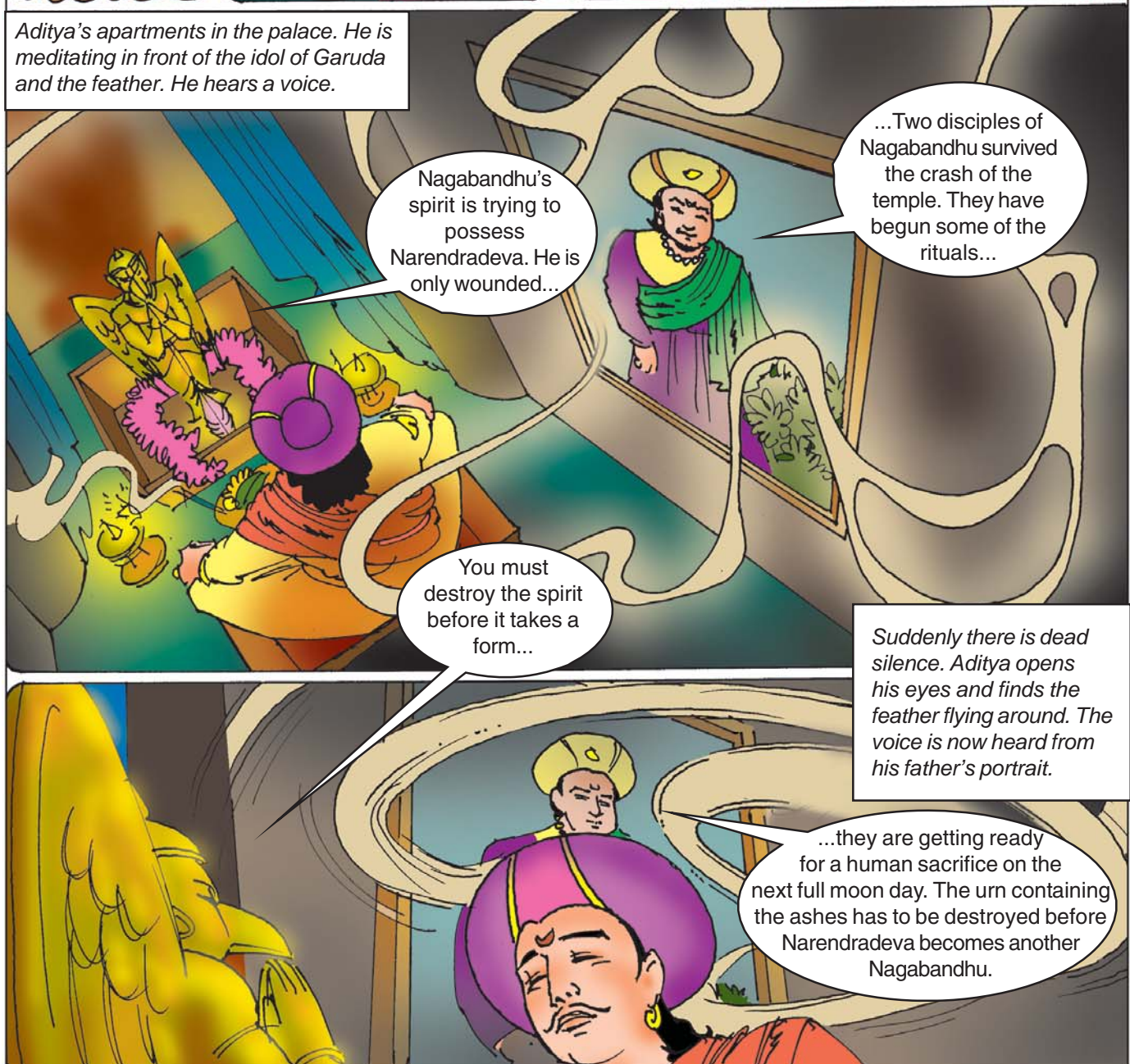
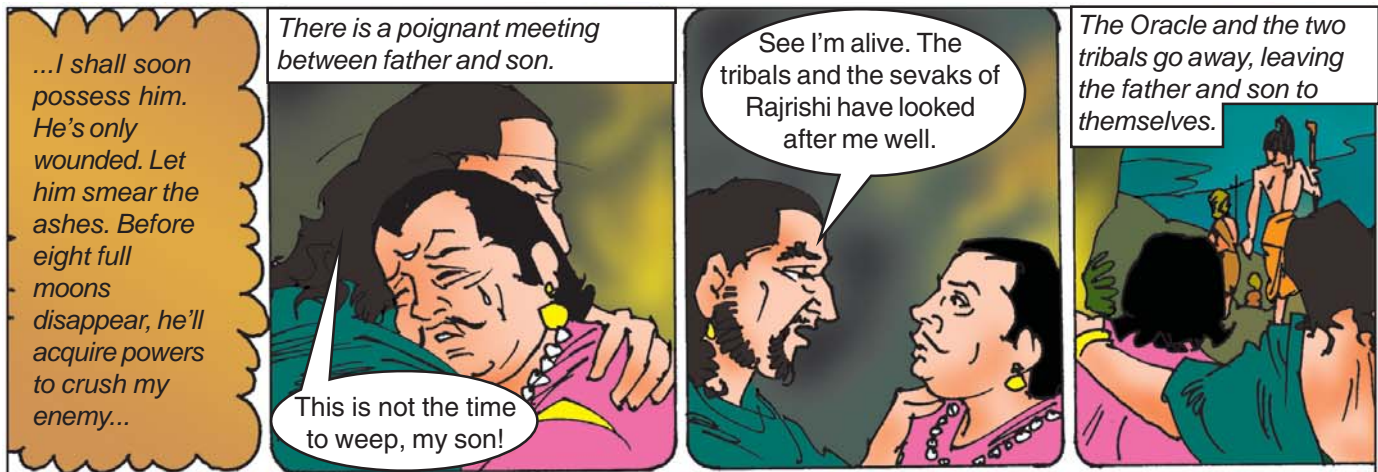
The disciples rush to save their master, but they are unable to go near because of the intense heat.

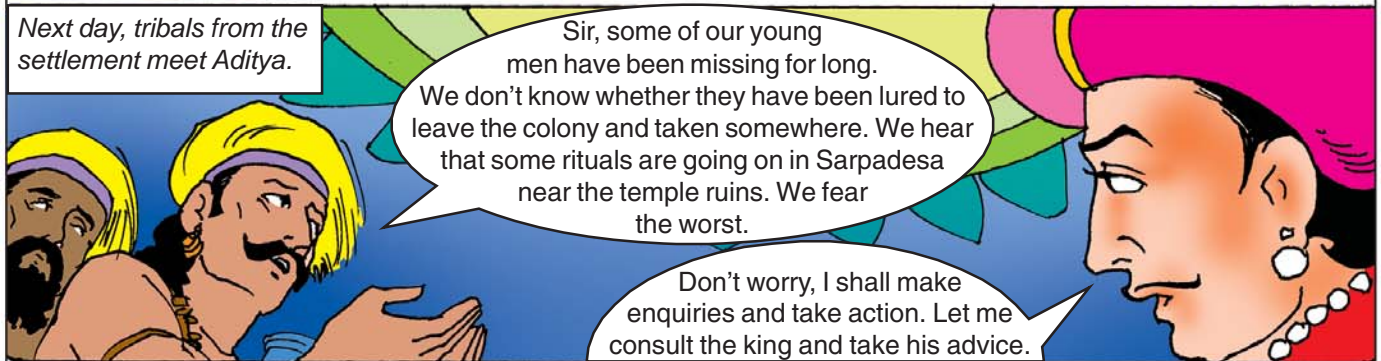


They hear their master's voice.



"My mortal body may be gone, but my spirit will live for long. My enemy may take me to be dead, but I won't be destroyed completely. I shall speak through certain people. Collect my ashes and take them to Narendradeva..."









TEARING THROUGH THE BLUE OVER ATLANTIC

On a cold autumn night in 1926, a lone airmail pilot took off from St. Louis on his way to Chicago. Slim, as everyone called him because of his lean and thin built, was on one of his routine flights with the day's mail bags. Flying mail in those early days was indeed a dangerous job full of risks. Often the weather was most unfriendly with storms, fog and snowfall. In fact, anything could go wrong in the air during those flying missions. Many of Slim's colleagues had lost their lives. He, too, had on several occasions narrowly escaped death, parachuting to the safety of the ground in the nick of time, while his plane spiraled down to a thundering crash. In spite of such uncertainty, these brave young men continued to fly day after day. What made them do so? Was it the spirit of adventure?

Yet, that evening flying alone in the dark skies above a thick blanket of fog and mist, with no guarantee of a safe landing, Slim was dreaming an incredible dream. He was dreaming of flying from New York to Paris, a staggering 3,610 miles, across the formidable barrier called the Atlantic Ocean. In fact, the world was waiting with great expectations for daring heroes to accomplish this fantastic feat. For, not long ago a wealthy French man, Raymond Orteig, had made a fabulous offer to the fledgling flying world. He had put up a fortune of 25,000 dollars for the first aviator to fly non-stop from Paris to New York or in the reverse direction. No one had yet come forward to claim the bounty.

But years later in September 1926, the French ace Rene Fonck, who had shot down 75 German planes in the war, set his sights on crossing the Atlantic from New York to Paris and win the attractive reward.

But it was not to be. His biplane, with two wings, three engines and a luxurious cabin burst into flames before it even left the ground. Fortunately, Fonck survived but his two companions were killed in the crash.

As 1927 dawned, four teams came forward to take up this great challenge. They all looked determined and were known for their courage and accomplishments. Among them was another war hero, Captain Charles Nungesser from France who had shot down 43 enemy planes. He decided to fly from east to west, Paris to New York in early spring along with his navigator Francis Coli.

So on the morning of May 8, 1927, all France cheered as the two men took off from Le Bourget airstrip. But alas, their plane just disappeared in the immensity of the great Atlantic Ocean after being last seen over Ireland, leaving no trace of its fate. The other three groups also reportedly met with failure and tragedy. In all the excitement,





nobody was aware that there was also a fifth contestant. He had applied alone, without any accompanying mate or navigator.

He was none other than the lanky airmail pilot nicknamed Slim, his real name being Charles Augustus Lindbergh. He was born in Detroit, Michigan, USA, on February 4, 1902. As a boy he was fascinated by flying and airplanes and, as he grew up, aviation became more and more the focus of his dreams for the future. He was also a very keen student of engineering. But at the age of 20, he left academic studies to pursue his great passion, flying. He enrolled himself in a flying school. Very soon he gained a reputation as a talented flyer, expert mechanic, and an intrepid airmail pilot.

"Why shouldn't I fly from New York to Paris? I've more than four years of aviation behind me, and close to two thousand hours in the air. I've barnstormed over half of the forty-eight states. Am I not qualified for such a flight?" he asked. Indeed, he did have all the guts, strength and expertise to meet this great challenge. In fact, it was more a challenge between man and the raging Atlantic.

So, with the help of some sponsors from St. Louis and an aircraft company, Lindbergh began to build the vehicle for his epic journey. Meticulously he planned every aspect of the flying machine, every item the plane would carry and every detail of the route and its navigation. Finally, the plane was completed in a remarkably short span of time. It

was a unique craft with only one engine, one wing and one seat.

No one seemed to believe that with such a toy-like plane, this daring adventurer would manage to get even half way across the Atlantic. People thought him to be mad and called him the "flying fool". But Lindbergh was determined and naming his plane the *Spirit of St. Louis* he prepared himself for the great adventure. It was true that his many lucky escapes as a stunt pilot had earned him the nickname, "Lucky Lindy". But one needed more than just luck to cross the tumultuous Atlantic in a tiny monoplane.

The rain was slowly easing out to a slow drizzle on the morning of May 20, 1927. Charles Lindbergh, munching one of the six sandwiches that he had been given, stowed the rest in the cramped cockpit. At 7.51 a.m. he strapped himself, closed the door and then leaning out of the window he exclaimed, "What do you say? Let's try it!" The next minute hundreds of onlookers watched with bated breath as the silvery plane pushed its way down the muddy airstrip. They remembered the sad fate of Captain Rene Fonck only six months ago.

But slowly and steadily the *Spirit of St. Louis* gathered speed and then faltering for a moment, which made everyone miss a heartbeat, it took off. Gritting his teeth Lindbergh almost willed his plane into the air from the sticky runway and it wobbled up inch by inch. It managed to clear the treetops and the overhead wires and was soon flying like a graceful bird. The people below now seemed like ants. Clearing a hill, the brave young lonesome adventurer now headed towards the unknown region of the great ocean. The rain clouds had dispersed and beautiful was the morning sky.

As darkness fell almost twelve hours after his departure, suddenly a storm brewed up from the angry foaming sea and Lindbergh and his little plane were engulfed in a thick, towering cloud. There were claps of thunder and lightning and big lumps of ice began to form on the wings of the plane. Before the

added weight stalled his progress with the imminent risk of crashing down into the turbulent waters below, he took a detour round the tip of the dangerous tempest and flew into sunshine and warmth. The treacherous ice began to melt away and he continued on his course.

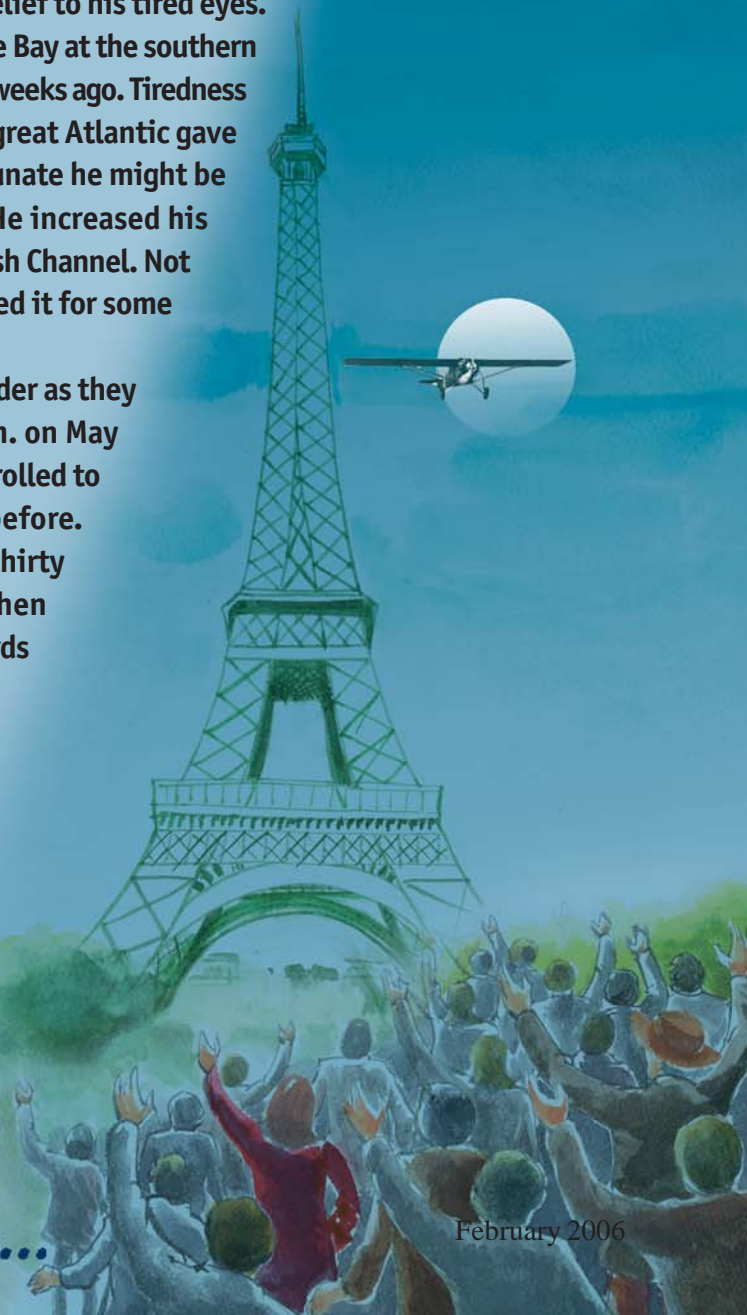
He was now battling with extreme fatigue. Again and again his mind was falling into a slumber while his eyes were wide open. He had been now flying for more than twenty-four hours with nothing but the deadly ocean beneath him. He had been without a wink of sleep since the night before the take off. To keep himself awake he flew at varying altitudes, one minute up in the clouds, the next skimming over the waves. Suddenly in the distance he was delighted to see trees outlined against the horizon. Was he already approaching land? Lindbergh later wrote: "...the mirages were so natural that, had I not been in mid-Atlantic and known that no land existed along my route, I would have taken them to be actual islands."

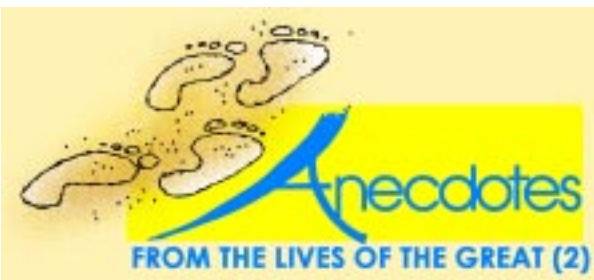
The welcome light of the morning sun brought great relief to his tired eyes. Soon he found to his great joy that he was flying over Dingle Bay at the southern tip of Ireland, the route he had planned and mapped several weeks ago. Tiredness vanished and the fact that he had managed crossing the great Atlantic gave strength to his weary mind and body. If he were still fortunate he might be able to reach the coast of France before darkness fell. He increased his plane's speed and was soon winging his way over the English Channel. Not before long the Eiffel Tower appeared in his view. He circled it for some time and then headed for the Le Bourget airfield.

A seething sea of humanity waited with awe and wonder as they heard a distant buzzing like a homing bee. At 10.22 p.m. on May 21, 1927, the unknown airmail pilot with his little plane rolled to a halt. He had accomplished what no man had done before. Alone he had flown non-stop from New York to Paris in thirty hours and thirty minutes. It was, as a newspaper then described, "the greatest feat of a solitary man in the records of the human race".

Charles Lindbergh became an instant world hero after one of the most daring journeys of the 20th century. One doubts if anyone had ever received the kind of honours and adulations that were heaped upon this youth of 25. None had ever even witnessed the reception that was accorded to him on his arrival in New York. When asked to speak he merely said, "I wonder if I really deserve all this!"

So humble and modest was one of history's bravest adventurers! - **A.K.D.**





triumphant in defeat

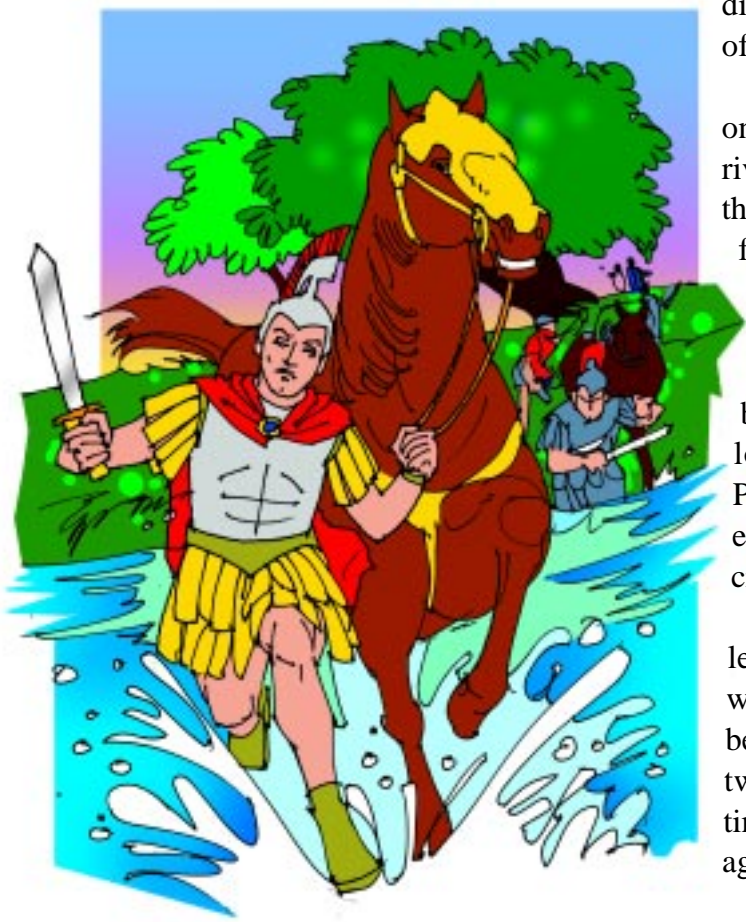
The year 326 B.C. marked a turning point in the history of India. The young, ambitious and adventurous King of Macedon in Greece, Alexander, often referred to as Alexander the Great (356 – 323 B.C.), invaded India. He could have very well been driven away from the gateway of India if only the King of Taxila, Ambhi, had not welcomed him like a much-desired guest. Not that Ambhi was hospitable or a lover of strangers, but it was his great desire to vanquish his neighbouring King Puru, who ruled a prosperous and peaceful state along the banks of the river Jhelum.

Ambhi was bad enough to invite a few other kings to come to his durbar and pay tribute to the invader. All the small kings, too, were bad enough to respond to the call, but the proud and brave Puru was an exception.

That was a time when the Indian kings used elephants as their great means of attack or defence. The Greeks did not know how to face those massive and disciplined animals. But King Ambhi taught the army of the invader the tricks for confronting the elephants.

Alexander then marched towards Jhelum and stood on its banks. But it was not easy for him to cross the river, for the moment his army would board the boats, the army of King Puru would attack them. It was difficult for the invading soldiers to defend themselves in the middle of the river. So Alexander, after a long wait, pretended to cross the river in any case. In the process he did not mind sacrificing a number of his soldiers, but that was only a strategy. His host, Ambhi, had located a spot where the water was not deep. While Puru concentrated on destroying the boats of the enemy, a bulk of the enemy army was already busy crossing the river elsewhere on foot.

Outwitted, King Puru, a tall and dignified figure, led his valiant army to dispel the invaders. The battle was fought for a full day. It was an uneven fight, because Alexander was supported by Ambhi. More than twenty thousand soldiers of Puru fell dead. In fact, a time came when the defiant Puru alone sat on his horse against a setting sun, ready to smite whoever dared to



capture him. Alexander, amazed at his courage and determination, sent Ambhi to ask him to surrender. Ambhi, with trepidation, approached him. But King Puru shouted: "Get lost, you coward, you treacherous chap!" and Ambhi slunk away.

Puru had been gravely wounded, blood streaming from nine cuts on his body and forehead. Even so he did not show the slightest sign of despair.

Alexander's captains surrounded Puru and led him towards their king. They were sure that Alexander would laugh at the unfortunate captive and probably behead him himself, for, he never let go his adversaries. Besides, he was capricious. Once one of his friends fell ill. The physicians advised the man not to drink wine with ice and not to gorge upon meat. But the sick man violated all these advice and, as a result died. Alexander put all the physicians to death! He also massacred the entire population of a village so that the spirits of his victims would give company to the departed friend's spirit! These are some of the instances of his ruthlessness.

Alexander had subdued so many kings while conquering Persia, but he had never seen a personality like Puru who seemed ready to enter a single combat with him if that was possible. Alexander viewed his prize prisoner with deep admiration. He, of course, knew that King Puru could not have lost the battle if not for Ambhi's treachery and tricks.

"Well, King Puru, now that the battle is over and you stand helpless, how would you like to be treated?" asked Alexander.

"Alexander, if you are a legitimate monarch, you should know how to treat another monarch!" answered King Puru.

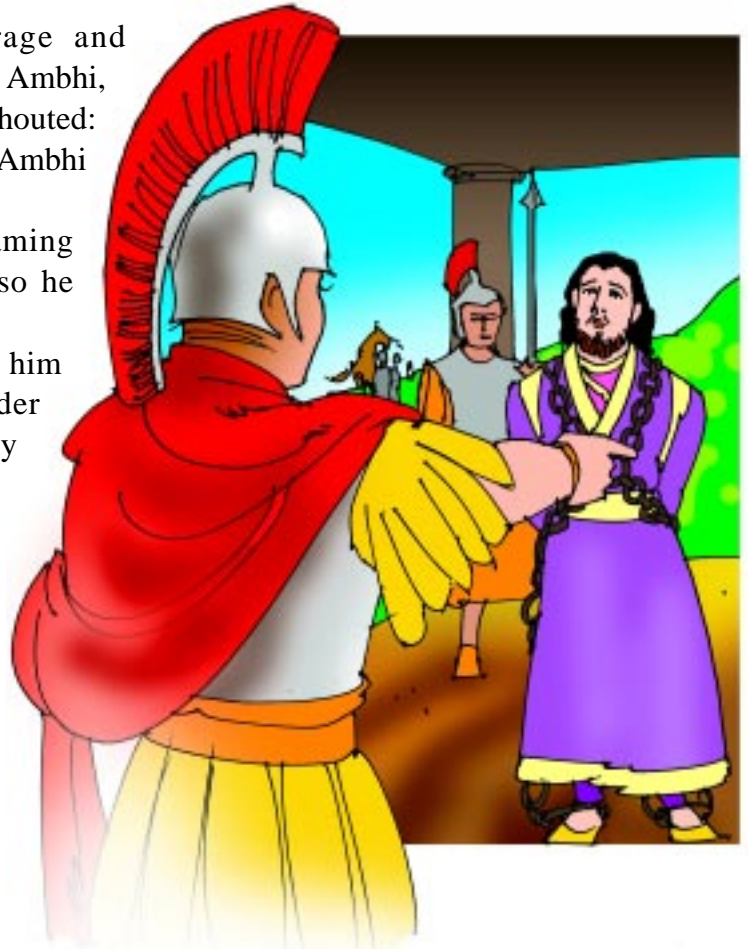
"Indeed, you should be treated with the dignity a monarch deserves. Do you wish anything more?" asked the greatly impressed invader once again.

"I don't, for, if you treat me as a monarch, that will include everything else I may be in need of," said King Puru.

Alexander appreciated the statement. He did not colonize the kingdom of Puru.

Needless to say, it is the courage, serenity and the sense of dignity shown by Puru that overwhelmed Alexander. Total fearlessness and great qualities of a man have their own way of influencing even his enemy.

Both King Puru and Alexander were happy with each other's nobility. But Ambhi was a very sad man.



(M.D)

GAINING FRIENDS



Anu and Rani were the best of friends who were inseparables. They both studied in Class VIII in the same section. They were partners in the class, so they sat next to each other. Back at home, they were neighbours, too. So they always played together, ate together and helped each other at times of need. They were among the best students in the class.

Their classmate, Madhu, was very jealous of their friendship. She was very weak in studies and no matter how much she tried, she could never reach their level. Madhu was very fond of Rani and she wanted to be her friend at any cost.

But Rani did not like Madhu because of her selfish nature. Madhu never shared any of her things with anybody, and thus nobody liked her. She could never get along with anyone.

Madhu realized that only if she could brake Anu and Rani's friendship could she become Rani's friend. She tried many ways to make Rani

and Anu fight, but they never fought. Madhu always failed in her plans.

Then, one day, she decided to do something really selfish, just like her.

Their school Annual Day was approaching, and Rani and Anu, who were also very good dancers, were asked to represent their class. Anu and Rani were soon preparing for the event.

Anu said, "Let's do a folk dance this time."

"Yes!" said Rani. "Let's do a *Garba*."

When Anu and Rani brought their costume to school, everybody admired Rani's dress as that was prettier. Anu felt a little sad.

Madhu understood that the time had come to work out her evil plan. The students participating in the dance were asked to keep their costume in the locker room.

As Anu and Rani were busy practising, Madhu asked in an innocent way, "Shall I keep your dresses in the locker room, while you are practising?" Though a little hesitant, Anu and

Rani somehow agreed. There was an evil smile on Madhu's face on hearing that.

On the day of the dress rehearsal, Madhu quietly sneaked into the locker room and burned Rani's dress! Then she kept Anu's ring, which she had to wear for the function, on top of Rani's dress thinking Rani will blame Anu for burning the dress.

On the day of the dress rehearsal, when Anu and Rani went to the locker room to change, they found Rani's dress lying about burnt. When Rani saw Anu's ring on her dress, she knew that someone else had done this on purpose. And she knew it could be none other than Madhu.

"Ma'am!" Rani screamed as she ran out.

The teacher rushed in. "Ma'am, somebody has burnt my dress!" She was crying bitterly. Anu was trying to console her. Everybody gathered around them.

Suddenly, they saw Madhu coming at a great speed with her bag on her shoulders. In her hurry to join the crowd she bumped against the

wall. Her bag fell down, spilling the contents and there was a matchbox!

When she was questioned, she fumbled and soon came out with the truth. "Yes, I had burned Rani's dress," she said angrily. "I did it so that I could create misunderstanding between Rani and Anu. I thought Rani would think that Anu had burned her dress and break her friendship with Anu. I thought I would console Rani and win her friendship, which I had been wishing for so long."

Hearing this, Rani took pity on Madhu and said frankly, "I don't like selfish people. Instead of trying to win just my friendship, you could have gained friendship of both of us."

Madhu stood with her head bent realizing her mistake. She apologized to both Rani and Anu. Rani said, "We both will surely be your friends if you change your ways and be loving and caring."

In their company, Madhu forgot her selfishness and the three became the best of friends.

Nandita Menon (12) Delhi
(An entry received for Children's Special)



CHANDAMAMA QUIZ-2

**Co-sponsored by
INFOSYS FOUNDATION, Bangalore**

**All the questions are based on the contents
of the issues of 2005.**

What you should do: 1. Write down the answers; 2. Mention your name, age (you should be below 16), full postal address with PIN Code; 3. Mention your subscriber number, if you are a subscriber; 4. Write on the envelope **CHANDAMAMA QUIZ-2** with complete address; 5. Mail your entry to reach us by February 28, 2006; 6. The results will be published in the April issue.

**AN
ALL-CORRECT
ENTRY WILL
FETCH A CASH
PRIZE OF
RS 250***

*** If there are more than one
all-correct entry, the prize
money will be equally divided.**

1. A tennis player is the brand ambassador for the Government's 'Save the Girl Child' campaign. Who is the player?
2. A 10th century ruler maintained a library of 117,000 books. A lover of books, he took them along wherever he went. Who was this ruler?
3. Who in India wears socks priced Rs 1,100 bought from Switzerland?
4. The group of people called Bishnois of Rajasthan take special care to protect a particular animal. Which is the animal?
5. Subhaga uttered a mantra a second time and was engulfed in a fire. Aditya and Aditi luckily escaped. How are the three related to each other?
6. "I'm the happiest man in the world!" To whom will you attribute this statement? What was the occasion?
7. A zamindar of Babakarpur village in Kendrapara district of Orissa, 200 years ago, erected a temple. Which deity is worshipped there?
8. Who is Pavitra Prabhakar? What is the name of his girl friend?
9. Senthali and Sharanya, high school students of Coimbatore, were in the news recently. What is their distinction?

**10. Who are the
two characters in the
picture below?**





FROM UTTAR PRADESH

THE ZAMINDAR AND HIS DAGGER

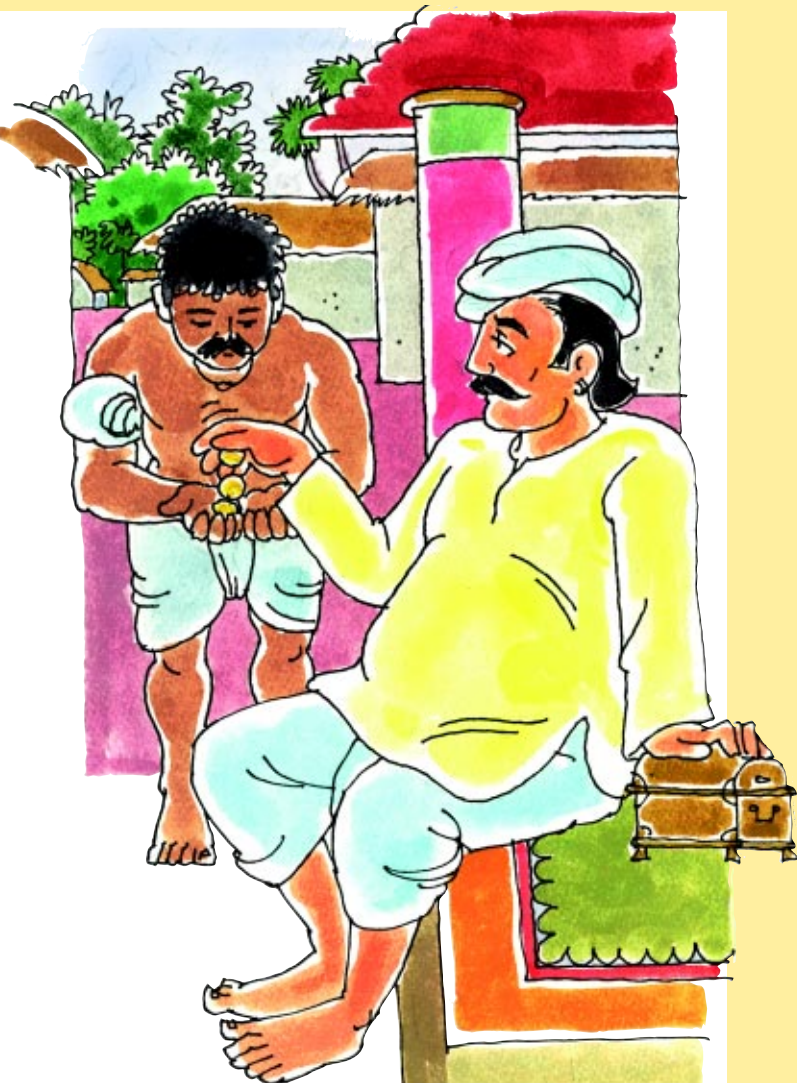
Seth Girdharilal was the zamindar of Kalivana village. He possessed vast tracts of fields where he had engaged farmhands to work for him. He was not a miser of the usual type, just thinking of amassing wealth. But he enjoyed being miserly in spending money. He would not pay his workers their full dues; or he would delay making the payments under one pretext or another, for one reason or another.

The poor workers, finding that they would not get work elsewhere, remained with him without raising their voice. The crafty Seth would wait for an auspicious day or a festival when he would call his workers home and dole out a part of their dues.

This he did, so that they would not curse him. And, on their part, they would go away silently, somewhat happy that at least that day they would have a full meal at home, and hoping that one day the Seth would settle all their dues. After all, they knew he would not turn a pauper if he paid all their dues, as he had enough and more money.

One day, Girdharilal set out for the town to buy cattle at the monthly market. The cows back at home seemed to have gone dry and they were not giving enough milk for himself, his wife, and his two growing up children. At the market, he chose two young cows and bargained their price and thought that he had made a deal.

Suddenly, he realised that he had forgotten to carry his velvet money-bag with him. He was in a dilemma. He did not want to lose the bargain; he also knew that the cattle-trader would not wait till the next day. He might even sell away the cows or take them to another market. The Seth knew he would have to raise money somehow



or other, so that he could take the cows with him that day itself.

Girdharilal went in search of a moneylender. He found one not far away from the market. But he asked for someone to stand surety for the Seth or some security. He had at that time his gold-hilted dagger with him. It

was a gift from his grandfather. He took it with him whenever he went out as he was always afraid of being waylaid by robbers. The moneylender agreed to accept it as guarantee and gave him the money he wanted. Girdharilal went away promising to return the loan and take back the dagger in the next few days. He then went back to the market, paid the price of the cows and took them home with the help of a young man who volunteered to go with him for a meal in return.

Girdharilal, of course, failed to turn up at the moneylender's the next week, or the next. He waited patiently for the zamindar for a month and then for another month, still there was no sign of the Seth. He held in his hand the dagger with the golden hilt, wondering what he should do with it. Would he be able to sell it and retrieve the loan amount and its interest? Moreover, who would buy a dagger from a moneylender? If he were to produce it to anyone, it would only help tongues to wag and he might lose his prestige.

So, he kept quiet about the dagger and decided to send his servant to the zamindar. The man returned as he could not find the Seth at home and he did not want to

waste his time, waiting for his presence. A few days later, the servant was sent again. That day, he was told that the zamindar had taken ill and was asleep and he could not be disturbed.

The moneylender held on, more patiently, hoping that Girdharilal, who must have been informed of the visits of the moneylender's messenger, might at least now return the loan and claim his dagger. He waited for a few more days and then thought of a plan. The next time, the barber Sukhram called on him, during the haircut the moneylender told him of the loan taken from him by Seth Girdharilal and how he had failed to repay the money even after two or three months. He also told him about the dagger with the golden hilt given to him as security and how it had gone missing from his house. The moneylender said he would feel safe if the Seth did not turn up with the money! As long as he did not repay the loan, he also would not be asked to return the dagger!

The moneylender knew that barbers are purveyors of news and many people would soon come to know of the Seth, the loan which had not been repaid, and the dagger that had mysteriously disappeared. Sure as enough, when Sukhram went to Girdharilal for his monthly haircut, he did not forget to share the 'news' with the Seth.

Girdharilal till now had not felt any shame that he had not repaid the loan to the moneylender. But now he guessed that many of the villagers would have already come to know of the whole affair and decided that he would confront the moneylender and ask him to produce the dagger if he wanted his money back. However, while going to the moneylender, he kept enough money to repay him, though he was sure he would not have to part with even a single paisa out of it.

At the moneylender's place, Girdharilal raised a hue and cry when he was told that the dagger had been stolen. "Who would expect a



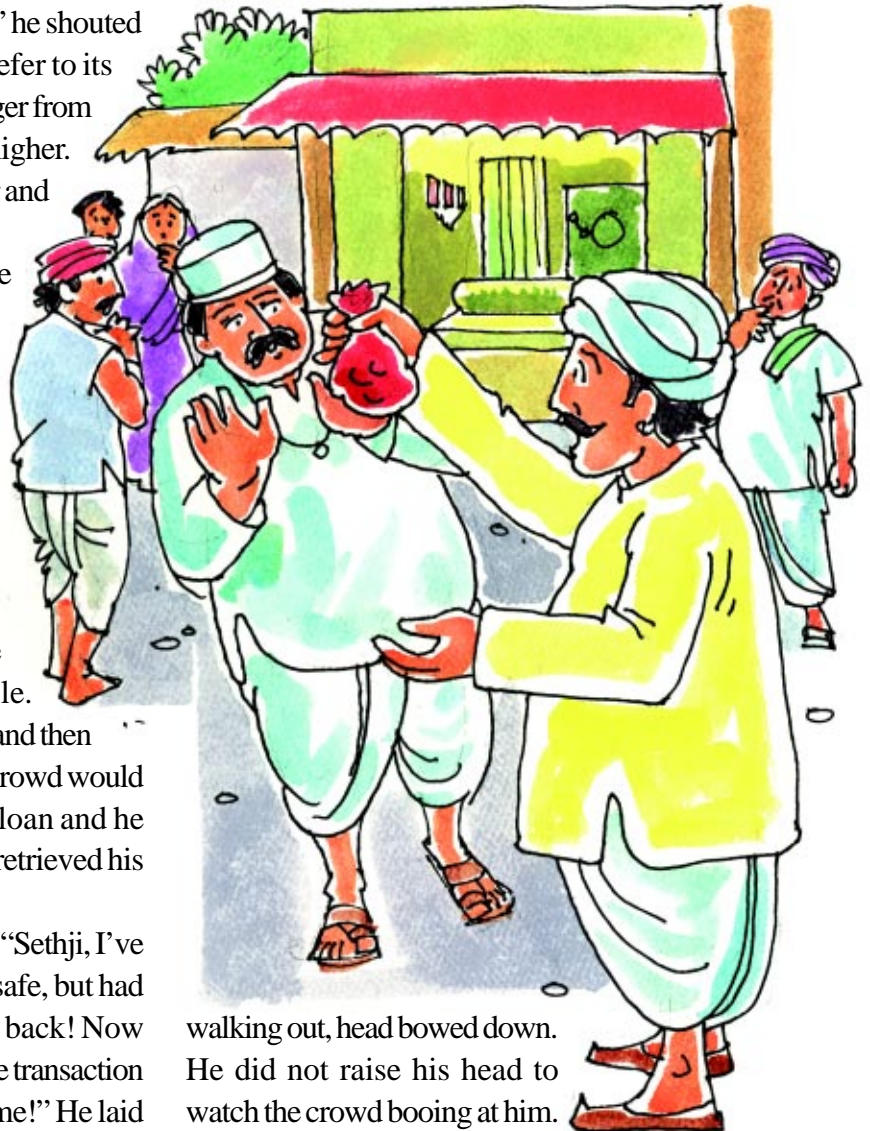
moneylender to keep a dagger as security?" he shouted at the top of his voice, taking care not to refer to its golden hilt. "Who would want to steal a dagger from a moneylender?" He raised his voice still higher. Girdharilal also sneered at the moneylender and laughed aloud to attract a crowd.

When he saw that there was a sizeable crowd around the house, he told the moneylender, "Why don't you go in and search well?" He was hoping that the moneylender would soon come out only to tell him that he would not insist on Girdharilal repaying the loan amount, and he would consider as if the transaction had been closed.

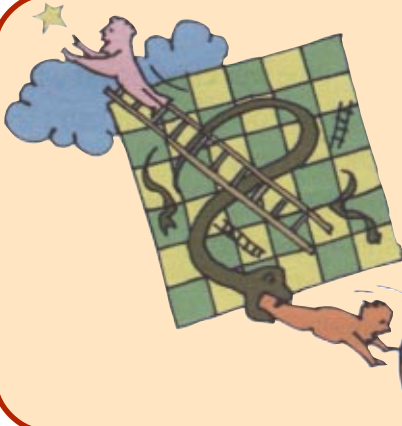
The moneylender meekly went inside and was not coming out for a long while. Girdharilal in the meantime was every now and then flaunting his velvet money-bag, so that the crowd would know he was serious about repaying the loan and he was an honest fellow. He would then have retrieved his name.

Suddenly, the moneylender rushed out. "Sethji, I've found your dagger! Here it is! I had kept it safe, but had forgotten where I had kept it. Here, take it back! Now can I have the money, so that we can close the transaction which had remained unsettled for a long time!" He laid stress on the last three or four words for the benefit of the crowd.

Girdharilal now had no option than to pay up the dues—the loan and the interest thereof. He was later seen



walking out, head bowed down. He did not raise his head to watch the crowd booing at him. But he had learnt a lesson. and those who really benefited from his consternation and feeling of shame were his farm labourers who now promptly got their full wages.



A BOARD GAME FOR SALVATION!

The game of Snakes & Ladders was created by the 13th century poet saint Gyandev. It was originally called 'Mokshapat.' The ladders in the game represented virtues and the snakes indicated vices. The game was played with cowrie shells and dices. Later through time, the game underwent several modifications but the meaning is the same, i.e, good deeds take us to heaven and evil to a cycle of re-births.



A DAY TO REMEMBER THE SAINT OF LOVE

Valentine lived in Rome about 1,800 years ago. Those were tumultuous times. Emperor Claudius was dreaming of greater glory for Rome. He wanted to expand his kingdom. So, he ordered all able-bodied young men to join the army. He enforced conscription, compulsory service. He wanted the young men to be totally devoted to the defence of the nation. So, he issued an order forbidding young men from marrying.

Around that time, Rome was also feeling the quakes caused by the spread of Christianity. The Apostles projected Christ as the Son of God. "Christ is the great redeemer. He lived and died, upholding truth, love and compassion. Accept him as your guide and you shall never again be bothered by the pains and perils of life. Peace and happiness shall be yours, always," they said.

The activities of the Christian missionaries upset Claudius II, then Emperor of Rome. "We have our Gods. Our Gods have been merciful to us, always. It is because of their blessings that Rome is such a powerful State today. I shall protect and defend our religious ways. I shall not let Christianity overrun our religion," declared Claudius.

He enacted laws banning Christianity. Yet some Christian missionaries worked secretly. They talked of love. They spoke of compassion. Would he show compassion to them? asked a few young conscripts. They had already found their souls' mates. They approached Valentine, a Christian priest. They told him, "Before we leave for service, we want to marry our sweethearts we have been courting for years. We thought we would settle down. Now comes this forced duty. Will you please solemnize our marriages?"

Valentine knew the risk. Yet he agreed. He performed secret marriage ceremonies for young couples. For some time, nobody suspected his activities. But soon the police cracked down on him. He was arrested and led to the local jail.

Cheerfully he put up with prison life. God's will, he often told himself, would prevail. That faith did wonders. Even the jailers felt drawn to him. A few of them became his friends. They brought him flowers, sent in by his admirers. They smuggled in letters of love

The chief of the prison had a little daughter. She was blind. Valentine heard of the girl's plight. He told the father, "Bring her to me. I need her love. Love does wonders. Love may cure her of blindness. She may regain her sight, so God help us all."

The prison chief hesitated.

Days sped. Often Valentine worked in the garden of the prison. He had a way with plants. He turned the earth over, cleared the patch off weeds and pests, set up blocks in which he raised different types of flowers. In a few months, the garden lit up with a splash of colours of the flowers. It looked as if the rainbow had come down to earth.

The chief of the prison saw the riot of colours. Oh! If only his little daughter could enjoy this feast of colours! If only! The old man walked up to Valentine and poured out his pain. Valentine gently pressed his palm while saying, "I know your pain. But, if Jesus wills, your daughter may see. Why don't you bring her over to the garden? The flowers are God's gift to man. God may work wonders through the flowers. Who knows?"

Next morning, he came to the garden, leading his daughter by the hand. Valentine was clipping off wilted flowers. "This is my daughter. Poor girl! She can't see. She lost her eyes when she was just two," the official told Valentine. He closed his eyes and prayed to Jesus while running his hand over her eyes. The official watched, with bated breath. Quickly Valentine moved back. The girl's eyelids

fluttered. She felt light flowing into her eyes. It took her a few minutes to see the world clearly. Then her eyes fell on the bed of flowers. She ran towards it, shouting, "Oh! I've never seen a rainbow on the ground."

The official held the girl by the hand and led her to Valentine. "Thank him. He made you see."

Valentine lifted her face up, gently, and added, "I didn't give you sight. I am a mere mortal. Jesus worked the miracle."

The miracle could not be kept a secret, for long. Valentine's name and fame spread. "He's no ordinary man. He's a Saint," said the people. Many young people remembered how he helped them marry. "He is the Saint of Love," said they.

The news reached the Emperor, too. "You die for your defiance of my orders," the Emperor sentenced him to death.

Valentine was dragged in chains to the jail. February 14 was set as the day for his execution. The news reached the girl who had regained sight with his help.

"Papa, he dies because he gave me sight. I wish I never got my sight back! I am ready to turn blind, if only he can be saved!" she wept.

"He's God's own man, my dear. I have never

seen such a noble man. But we can do nothing to save him. Whatever will be will be," her father consoled her. Next day, he conveyed his daughter's feelings to Valentine. Quickly the prisoner sent a note to the girl. He assured her that it was not her fault that he had been sentenced to death. He signed it, *From Your Valentine*.

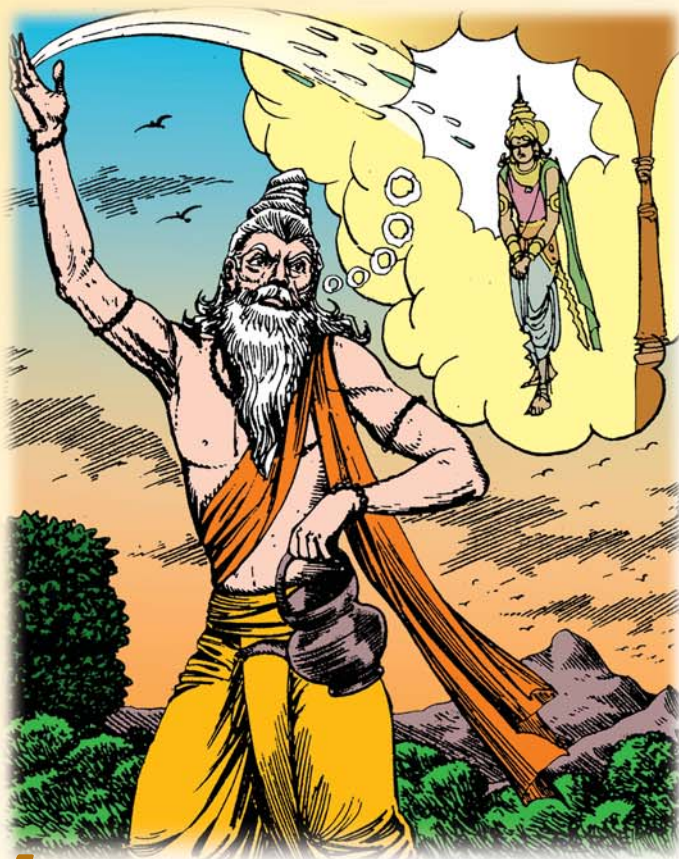
He was beheaded on February 14. Two centuries later, Pope Gelasius I made him a Saint, declared February 14 as the Feast day of Saint Valentine, the martyr.

Centuries later, young lovers began to remember Valentine's role in helping young lovers of Rome to marry in secret. They started exchanging love letters. Soon this gained in popularity. Valentine cards have now become the rage of our times.

-R.K.Murthi



GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM



Indra and Vritra met several times and exchanged sweet words. But while taking walks in the gardens or along the sea, Indra waited for his chance to kill the demon.

Twastu was surprised to hear that Vritra was freely mixing with Indra. He went to Vritra and told him, “How can you trust Indra? He can go to any extent to get rid of you. None but a crazy demon can befriend Indra!”

Twastu’s warning did not seem to produce any result.

One evening Vritra and Indra were enjoying a walk on the seashore. Vritra had received a boon to the effect that he cannot be killed either during the day or at night. The evening was neither day nor night.

Indra prayed to Yogamaya for help. By then Vritra’s crimes and arrogance had reached a degree when consequences were inevitable.

Indra raised his thunder. By the illusion created by Yogamaya, Vritra mistook it to be the foamy wave of the sea.

The thunder fell on Vritra. He was crushed to death.

Indra returned to Amaravati. He made a temple in the Nandan Kanan—the celestial garden—for the Divine Mother. He also expressed his deep gratitude to Vishnu.

However, Indra suffered from a guilty conscience. After all he had been treacherous to a demon who took him for his friend.

On hearing of his son’s death, Twastu grew furious with Indra. He cursed Indra saying that Indra must undergo hellish sufferings for his mean conduct.

Indeed, Indra could not escape the consequences of his action. He grew pale. The gods, no doubt, benefited immensely from Vritra’s death, but they too lost much of their respect for Indra. The sages looked down upon him.

No wonder Indra was disheartened. He felt no enthusiasm for any work. Depressed and gloomy, he kept indoors most of the time.

“What worries you, now that you have no foe to fear?” asked his consort, Shachi Devi.

“I’m beset with a sense of guilt. Nothing can make me happy. I find no joy in dance and music. There is no peace in my heart,” said Indra.

One day he slipped away from his palace, hiding from all. He took shelter in the great lake, the Manasarovar. Like a serpent he crept into the stem of a lotus and passed his time there.

There was disorder everywhere because of Indra’s disappearance. Since Indra was missing for long, the gods and the sages began looking for a suitable person to sit on the throne of heaven.

King Nahusha was their choice. He was famous for his nobility and ability, though a human being.

26. NAHUSHA ON INDRA’S THRONE

Unfortunately, once on Indra's throne, King Nahusha lost his balance of mind. Power made him proud—so much so he demanded that Shachi Devi should now be his queen! The gods found the situation quite embarrassing. They sought the advice of their guru Brihaspati.

As advised by Brihaspati, Shachi Devi informed Nahusha that she proposed to perform a Yajna, wishing her husband's return. If the rite showed no result, she would of course become Nahusha's queen!

Nahusha agreed to wait.

The Yajna was duly performed. But there was no sign of Indra coming back.

Shachi Devi prayed to Yogamaya for help. Yogamaya took her to Indra's hiding place. Indra told her what she should do.

Shachi Devi sent a message to Nahusha asking him to come to her in a palanquin borne by sages—if he wished to marry her.

Nahusha summoned eight sages and ordered them to carry him in a palanquin to Shachi Devi's palace. The sages were obliged to do as ordered.

Among them was Agastya, who proved slow. The impatient Nahusha kicked him and said, "Sarpa!" The word meant, "Go fast!"

Agastya lost his temper. "Become Sarpa!" He said. By "Sarpa" he meant serpent.

At once Nahusha turned into a serpent and came crashing down to the earth.

Long before the reign of Lord Rama, there was a king called Trisanku of the Sun dynasty. His guru, Viswamitra, had promised him a place in heaven. But he could not succeed in securing it for him. He took his failure as a challenge and created a new heaven for Trisanku by his spiritual power.

King Trisanku had a son named Harishchandra. Harishchandra remained childless for long. One day he prayed to God Varuna: "Please give me a son. I won't mind sacrificing him to you."

A son was born to the king. The kingdom went festive.

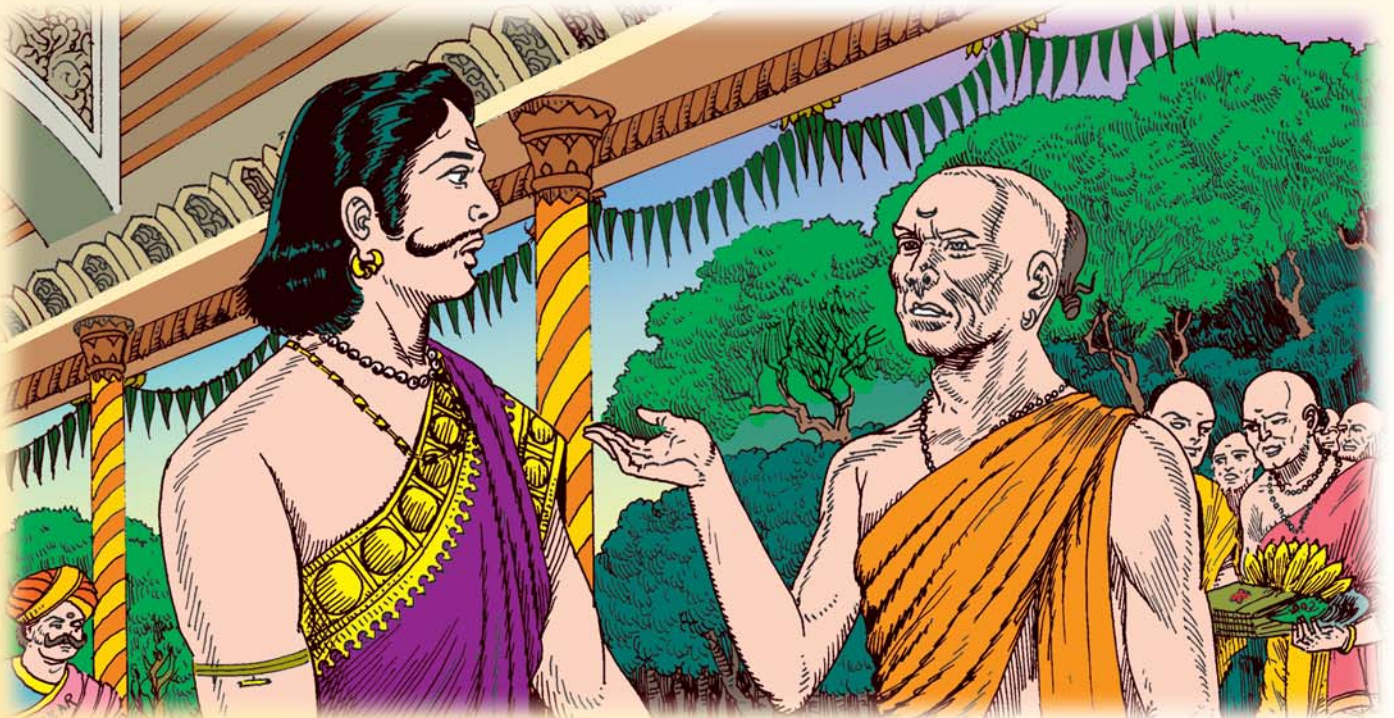
Varuna took the form of a brahmin and met the king and said, "When are you going to perform a Yajna in my honour and sacrifice your son to me?"

The king got a jolt. "The child is still an infant. Where is the question of sacrificing it now? Should you not wait at least for a month?"

Varuna went back, but returned after a month. The king feigned innocence about the purpose of the god's visit and said, "How can I serve you, O luminous Varuna?"

"How can you serve me? Why, have you clean forgotten your promise to sacrifice your child to me?" asked Varuna, a bit annoyed.

(To continue)



JUSTICE FROM TEJASWI



King Tejaswi was known for his just decisions. One day, after the court had dispersed, he was about to go to his apartments for food and rest when he overheard a conversation at the doors of the durbar hall. A brahmin was seeking an audience with the king and the guard was trying to send him away. "I told you, the king has already retired for the day and will not meet anybody. Sir, please come back tomorrow."

The brahmin persisted. "I'm a poor brahmin and cannot stay in the city for another day. I promise I won't take much of his majesty's time. Please take me to him!"

King Tejaswi did not proceed to his chambers. Instead, he went up to the door and asked the guard to let in the brahmin. "May I know what brought you here and why you wish to see me," he asked of the brahmin.

He looked pitifully at the king and said: "Your majesty, I came to this city after wandering about in several kingdoms from where I collected donations with great difficulty. I had about a hundred gold coins by the time I reached the borders of your kingdom. I had heard a lot about the prosperity of this place and I thought, if I'm fortunate, I could collect some amounts before I

returned home. I was tired and hungry when I got to Maninagar. I saw a well and wanted to have a drink. I kept my bag containing my clothes and the hundred coins on the parapet wall and was drawing water when a crow swooped down and began to peck at the bag. As my hands were not free, I shooed it away, but in its frenzy, the crow pushed my bag and it fell into the well." The brahmin was in tears.

"What happened then?" queried King Tejaswi.

"Your majesty, I had all along saved the hundred coins from being stolen during my wanderings. I cursed myself for being careless and losing the money to a crow. I lay down because it was already late and I couldn't possibly be getting down the well to search for the bag. I didn't sleep the whole night and waited for someone to help me. Then a man came here to have a drink and I told him of my misfortune. He offered to get into the well and retrieve the bag, but asked me what his share would be. I didn't tell him how many coins there were in the bag. So, I merely said, I wasn't in a position to spare much, but he could give me whatever he liked. He then climbed down the well and came

ORIGIN IN INDIA

The art of Navigation and Navigating was born in the river Sindh 6,000 over years ago. The very word 'Navigation' is derived from the Sanskrit word NAVGATI. The word navy is also derived from the Sanskrit word 'Nau'.



back with the bag. He opened the bag himself and gave me just two coins and kept the rest with himself. My protests drew a crowd who all said, "This should not have happened in Tejaswi's kingdom. He is well known for his justice." That's how I found my way here, hoping that I could appeal to you for justice."

"Would you remember the name of that man?" asked King Tejaswi. "What's his job?"

"As I was greatly upset by his behaviour, I couldn't think of asking him anything, your majesty. He mingled himself in the crowd, which also disappeared soon. I was in a hurry to come here and meet you," replied the brahmin.

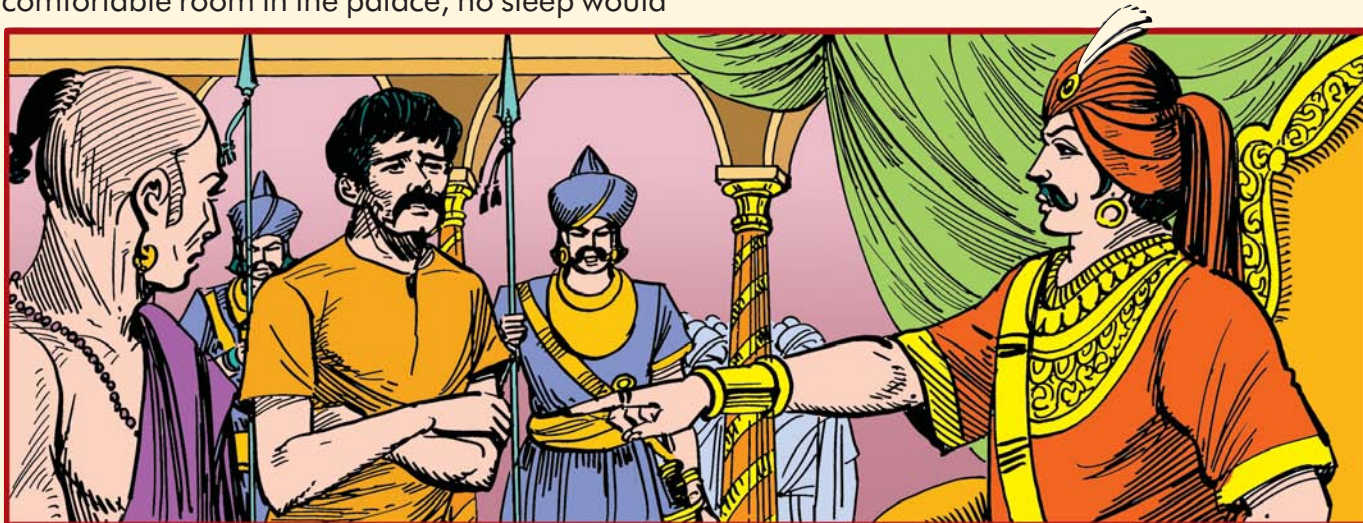
"All right, we'll have food together and you stay in the palace for the day and we'll meet again tomorrow. Meanwhile, let me make some enquiries," said King Tejaswi as he led the brahmin to the inner apartments.

Though the brahmin was later taken to a comfortable room in the palace, no sleep would

come to him. He was wondering how the king would solve his problem.

The next day, the king sent for the brahmin. "My guards made enquiries in Maninagar and found this man, who has admitted that he picked up the money-bag from the well. On my questioning him, he said, you had told him to give you whatever he liked. But he shouldn't have been so greedy as to keep ninety-eight coins and given you only two. So, my decision is, he'll get two coins for his help and you'll keep the remaining ninety-eight coins," said the king. He turned to the man and added, "I should have punished you for being greedy, but I'm letting you off, because you did extend some help to this brahmin." The man was led away by the guards.

King Tejaswi gave the brahmin a hundred coins and asked one of his guards to escort him till he crossed the borders of the kingdom.



ANOINTING OF A STATUE



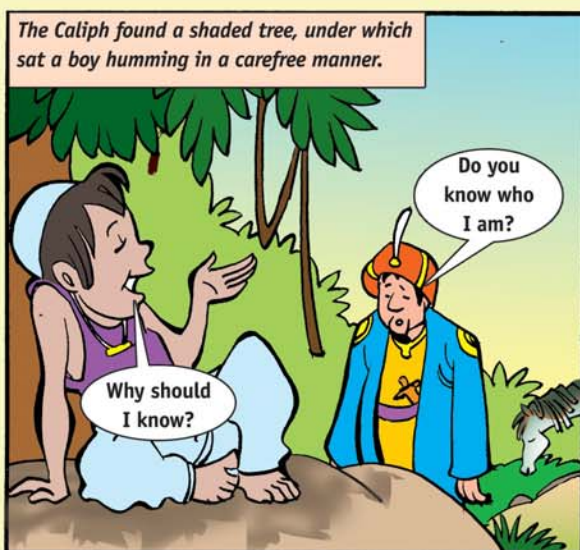
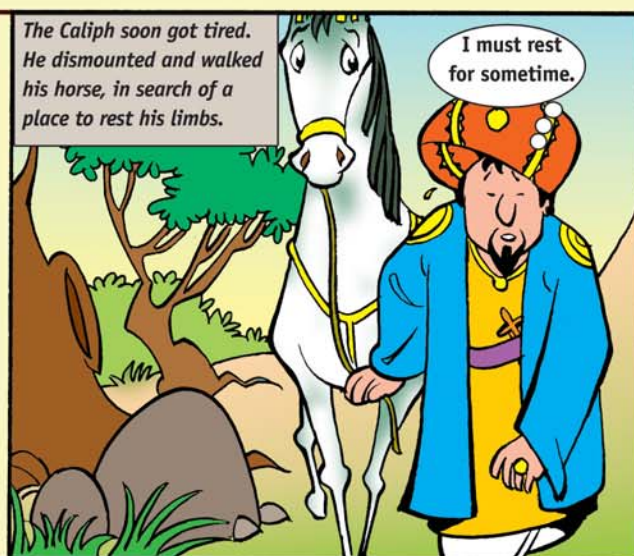
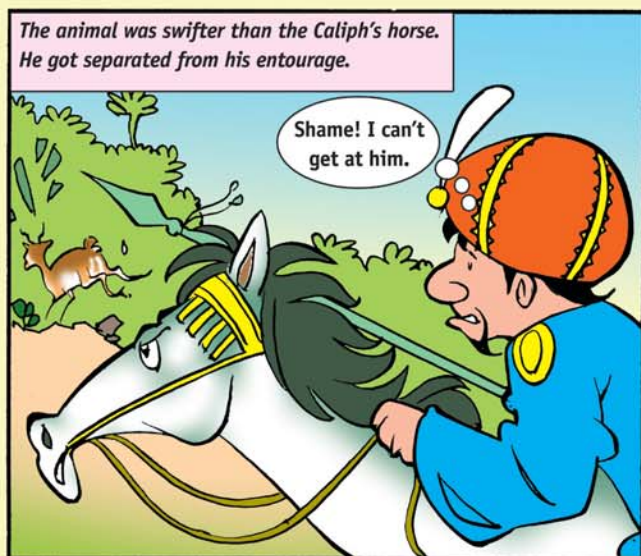
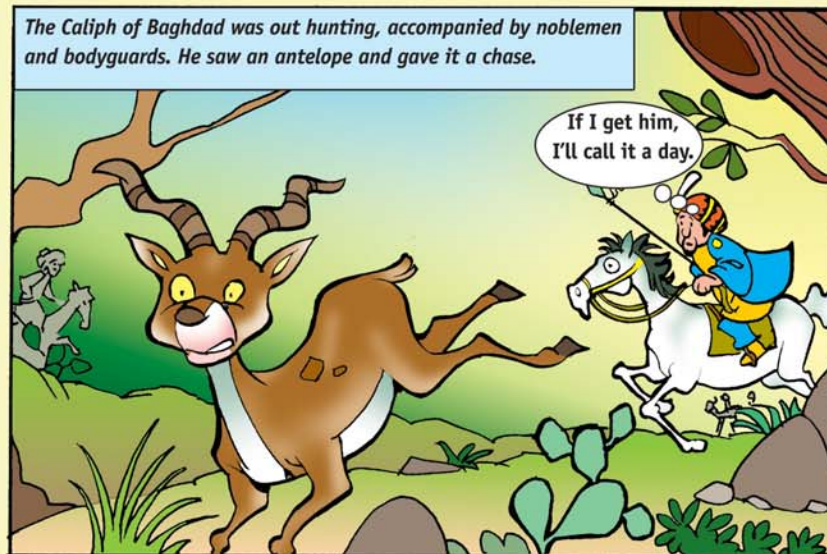
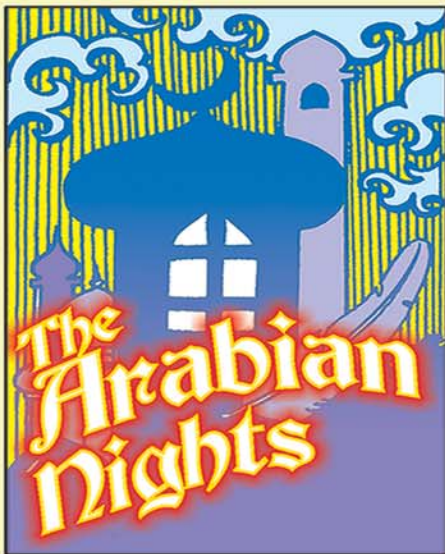
All roads will lead to Shravanabelagola in Hassan district of Karnataka in the second week of February, when the 86th Mahamastakabhishek (anointing) of the statue of Gommateswara Sri Bahubali takes place from the 8th to 19th. This Mahotsav (festival), which is held once in 12 years, is being eagerly looked forward to by the Jain community. Some 3,000,000 devotees from all over the world are expected to congregate in the holy town where stands the 57ft (17.5m) high figure of Sri Bahubali—the tallest monolith statue in the world.

Jainism was founded by Vardhamana Mahavira, who was the last of the 24th Tirthankaras or spiritual leaders. The first Tirthankara, Adinatha Rishabhadeva, was a king. He wished to renounce the world. So, he gave one half of his kingdom to his elder son Bharata and the other half to the younger son Bahubali, who later objected to Bharata calling himself Chakravarti or emperor. A war appeared imminent. However, their ministers prevailed upon them and requested them not to involve their armies. The brothers agreed to a fight between themselves. Though victorious, Bahubali renounced his kingdom, and went away and stood in penance, without food or water, for a whole year by which time creepers wound his legs and crept up to his arms. He soon attained salvation. Bharata made a golden statue of his brother and erected it in Bahubali's kingdom Paudanapura.

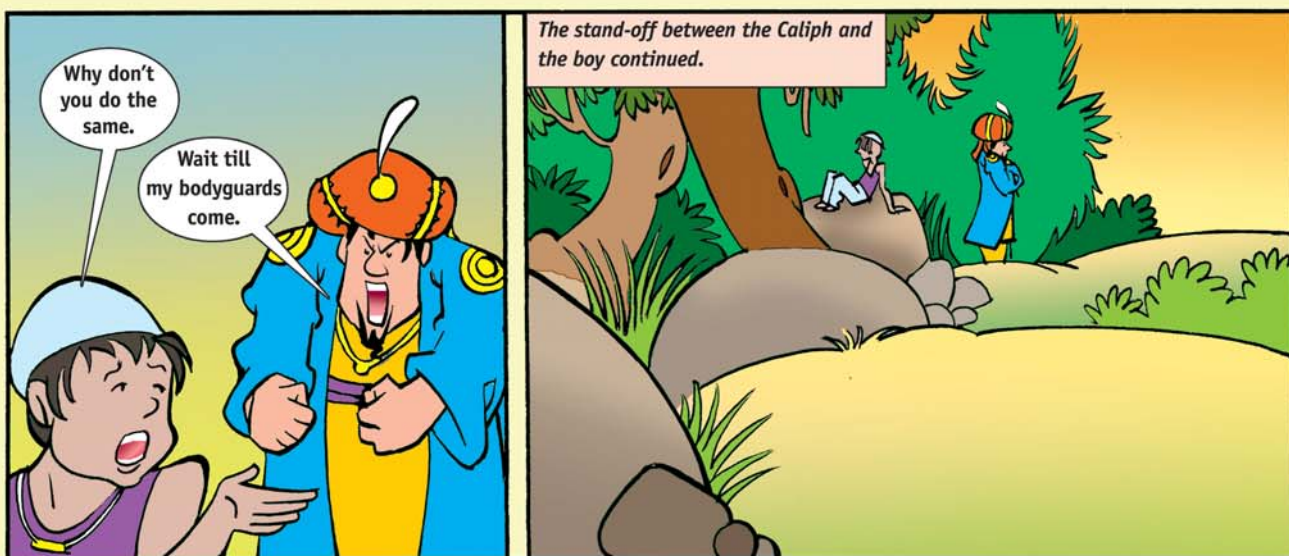
Many years later, in the 10th century A.D., Chamund Rai was the Prime Minister of King Rachmall II of the Ganga dynasty. Chamund Rai once took his mother to Paudanapura where Bahubali once ruled. Strangely, mother and son had the same dream in which goddess Kushmandini Devi appeared before them and asked them to shoot an arrow from Chandragiri hill towards Indragiri in the south. Next day Chamund Rai shot his golden arrow at Indragiri, when he saw the figure of Bahubali etched against the hill. Immediately, he set about chiselling a statue from the rock. The work was later completed by a team of sculptors. Chamund Rai performed the first Mastakabhishek on March 13, 981. He had a pet name, Gomat, meaning handsome. The 'god of Gomat' thus became Gommateswara. The statue captivates everybody with the benevolent smile on the face.

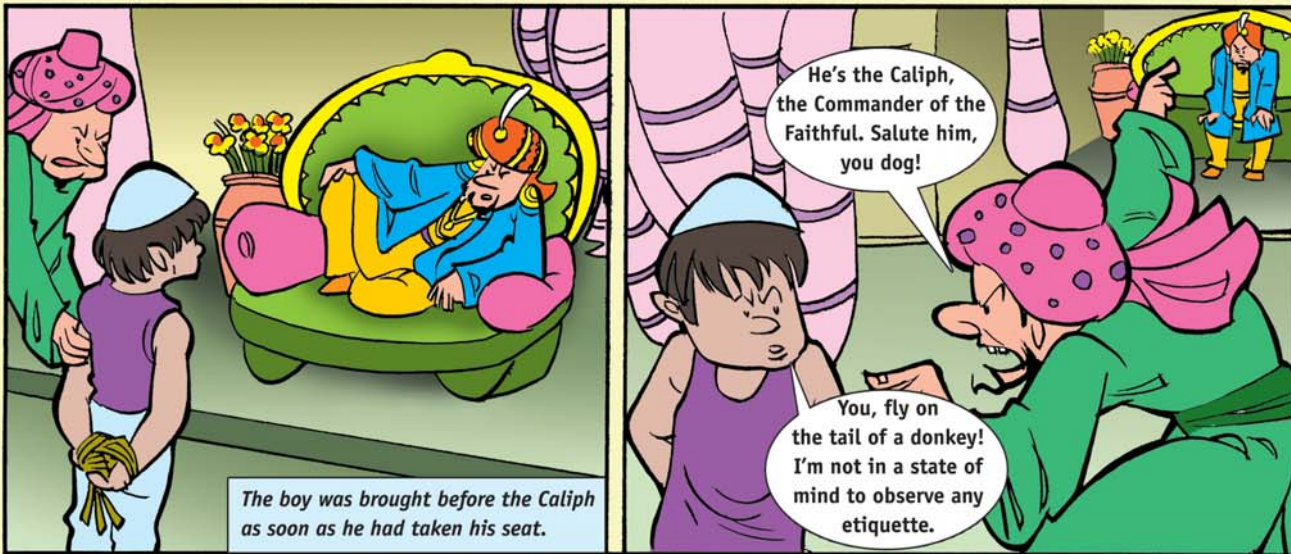
Between the two hills is an expanse of water called bili-gola (white lake). The statue is usually anointed with water from the lakes and rivers of India, tender coconut, sugarcane juice, honey, milk, turmeric paste, sandal paste, flowers and precious stones.

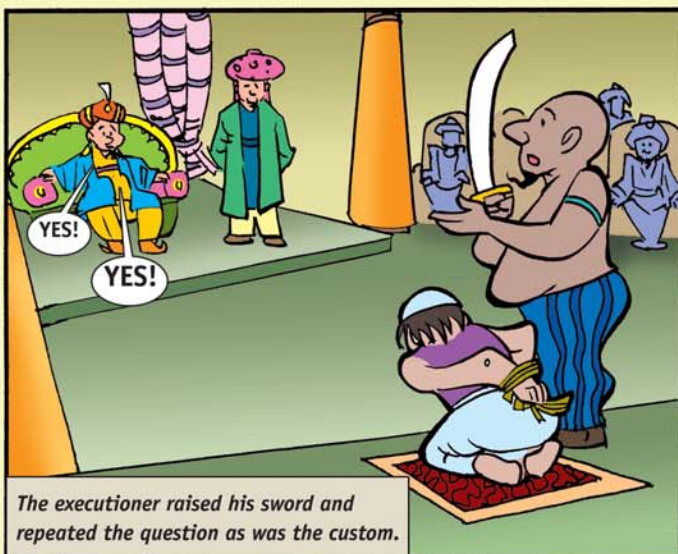
The first Mahamastakabhishek of the 21st century was formally inaugurated by the President of India, Dr.A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, on January 22, at a function in Shravanabelagola.



THE EAGLE AND THE BIRD

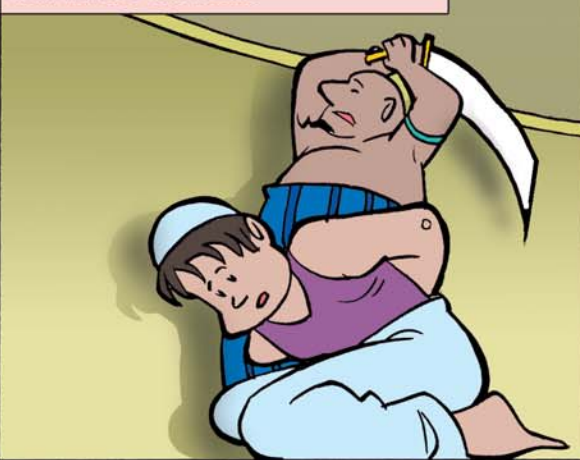






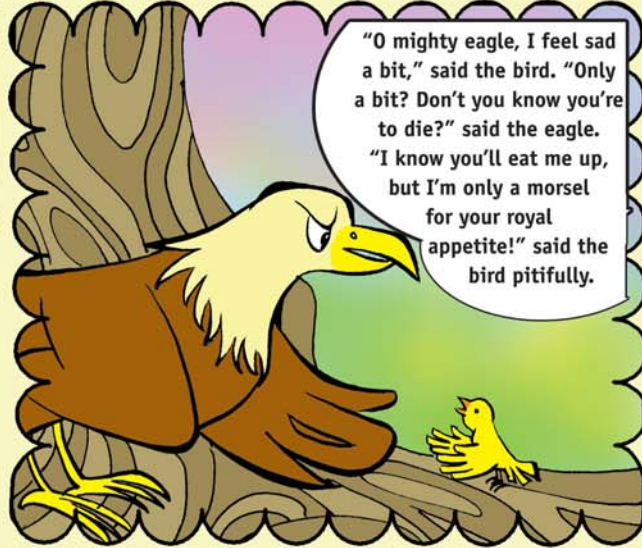
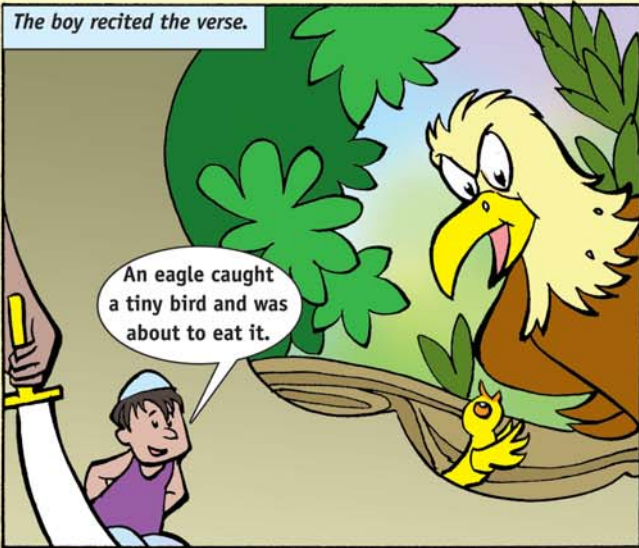
The executioner raised his sword and repeated the question as was the custom.

The boy, eyes fixed on the ground, sat without a murmur, till the question was asked the third and last time when...

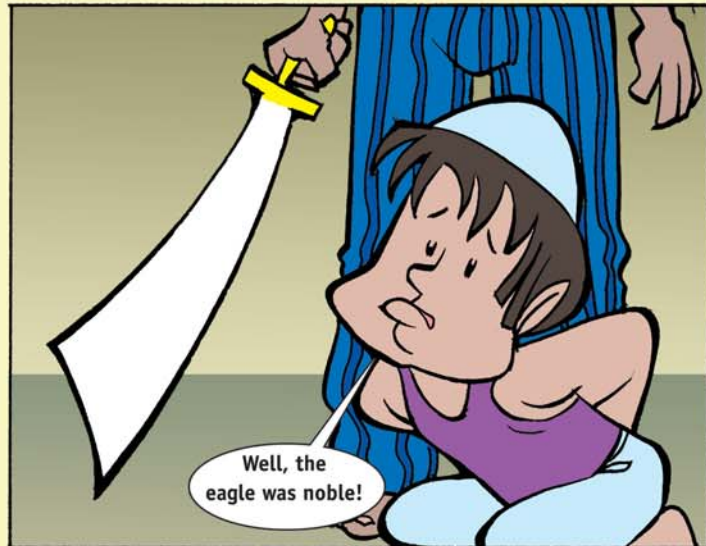


THE EAGLE AND THE BIRD

The boy recited the verse.



Pleased, the noble eagle released the bird, and it soon flew out of sight!



The Caliph got the message of the verse. He was no longer angry with the boy. He wanted to be noble like the eagle.



The boy now saluted the Caliph, grabbed all the gifts and ran out.



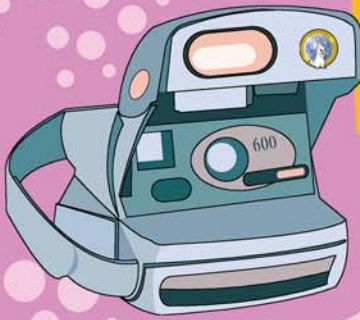


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Can you write a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other?

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"Waiting impatiently"



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INEXHAUSTIBLE SOURCE OF ENERGY



Veena, along with her parents, is on a pilgrimage to Tirupati. After some wait in the queue, they get a chance to worship the Lord. They come out happy and satisfied. As they are hungry, they are led to the Devasthanam dining hall where free food is served. Veena is stupefied on seeing the thousands of pilgrims gathered there to eat the meal, which she finds is served piping hot. How is this possible, she wonders. She turns to her uncle, who is a more frequent visitor to the temple town. Uncle Mohan puts it simply, "We've to be grateful to the sun!" Veena cannot understand the significance of the statement. "Uncle, please explain." He agrees. "I shall, but first eat the food before it gets cold."

Later, as they walk back to their cottage, Uncle Mohan says, "I should have been a little more explicit. It is solar energy, or what the sun gives us almost free of cost!" "I know solar energy, but..." says Veena, with some wonderment on her face. "Haven't you seen pictures of solar cells?" asks Uncle Mohan.

"The energy needed to cook all that food comes from the hundreds of solar cells on the panels on the roof. This energy is harnessed, so that it can be used any time of day or night."

Veena still has some doubts. "Uncle, do you mean that cooking can be done without using gas?" Her uncle now explains, "Veena, the source of oil and gas is the fossilised fuel that lies buried deep in the earth. But, unfortunately, this reserve of fuels will be exhausted in another fifty or hundred years, whereas the energy to be procured from the sun is inexhaustible." He adds with a smile, "Veena, would you believe that the sun produces enough energy in a single second to meet the demands of all humanity for two thousand years? So, there is an urgent need to harness solar energy. Thereby, we will be receiving unpolluted energy and at the same time conserving whatever energy we have hitherto been using."

"Uncle, is solar energy used only for mass cooking?" "No, Veena, we can use it instead of electricity in our homes, community homesteads, street lighting, even traffic signals. But, all about that another time," says Uncle Mohan.

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sentence given within brackets.

(Maha Rich Maha Fun Maha Yummy
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Steps to be followed to win the prizes

1. Make as many meaningful words as you can by using the letters from the above sentence given within brackets.
2. Write down all the words in a piece of paper (list of words).
3. Fill the details in the enclosed coupon.
4. Collect 10 empty MAHALACTO wrappers.
5. Attach all of them together (list of words + coupon + 10 empty MAHALACTO wrappers)
6. Send all of them to the following address:

**Post Box No. 1056,
Kilpauk, Chennai - 600 010.**

**Closing Date :
March 10, 2006.**



**First Prize - 25 Nos.
Konica Camera**



**Second Prize - 200 Nos
Wrist-watches**



**Third Prize - 750 Nos.
5-in-1 Games Set**

COUPON

Name :

Age : Date of birth: Class : School :

Home address :

.....PIN Code :

No. of words.....(list attached)

Signature of Participant

Terms and conditions: • The Contest is open to Indian children below 15 years. They should not be related to any employee of Chandamama India Ltd., or Nutrine Confectionery. • A participant may send any number of entries. • Each entry has to be accompanied by 10 wrappers of MAHALACTO and the coupon above duly filled up. • Entries without wrappers and coupon will not be considered. • Whoever sends the most number of words will be qualified for one of the prizes. • In case of identical number of maximum meaningful words, winners will be chosen by lucky draw • The first lucky draw will be held in the month of February and the final draw will take place in the month of March. • Closing Date : March 10, 2006. • Send the entries, coupon and MAHALACTO wrappers in an envelope superscribed MAHALACTO WORD POWER Contest to Post Box No. 1056, Kilpauk, Chennai - 600 010. • Nutrine Confectionery Company Private Limited. will not be responsible for any contestant's mail if it is lost in transit. • Guarantee on prize articles lies entirely with the manufacturer and not with Nutrine Confectionery Private Limited. All entries and contest material will become the property of Nutrine Confectionery. • Cash in lieu of prizes will not be given. • Winners should fill in a claim form while collecting the prizes at the respective dealer / distributor point. • All decisions regarding the offer are solely at the discretion of Nutrine Confectionery. No communication with regard to the contest will be entertained. • All disputes shall be subject to Chittoor, A.P jurisdiction only. • Nutrine Mahalacto is also available without this offer.

